California Department of Education

Executive Office

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# MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** February 18, 2021

**TO:** MEMBERS, State Board of Education

**FROM:** TONY THURMOND, State Superintendent of Public Instruction

**SUBJECT:** Distance Learning Curriculum and Instructional Guidance Project Outline

## Summary of Key Issues

Section 121 of Senate Bill (SB) 98, Chapter 24, Statutes of 2020 directs the Sacramento County Superintendent of Schools/Sacramento County Office of Education (SCOE) to develop draft distance learning curriculum and instructional guidance for mathematics, English language arts (ELA), and English language development (ELD) to be considered for adoption by the State Board of Education (SBE) by May 31, 2021. Seven hundred fifty thousand dollars ($750,000) was appropriated from the General Fund to the California Department of Education (CDE) for this purpose. This information memorandum provides background information and an outline of the content in the Distance Learning Curriculum and Instructional Guidance Project (DLGP).

## Brief History of Key Issues

The purpose of the DLGP, as stated in SB 98, is to develop draft distance learning curriculum and instructional guidance for mathematics, ELA, and ELD. This guidance includes a framework for addressing critical standards, guidance and resources for formative and diagnostic assessment, guidance on recommended aggregate time for instruction and independent work by grade span, and guidance on embedding social-emotional supports for pupils into distance learning curricula. The final document will be available to the public after SBE action in May.

Beginning in July 2020, SCOE, CDE, and SBE staff established regular communication about the DLGP through bi-weekly meetings with additional meetings scheduled as needed.

Throughout September 2020, SCOE conducted extensive outreach to stakeholders to inform the DLGP. These stakeholders include county offices of education, LEAs, and experts in the areas specified in subdivision (c) of SB 98 such as the California Subject Matter Projects, the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE), and Computer-Using Educators (CUE).

In October, following the initial stakeholder outreach efforts, SCOE formed an advisory committee which includes leadership from ISTE, CUE, CDE, and several SBE staff members, as well as representatives from other entities including:

* El Dorado County Office of Education
* Imperial County Office of Education
* Kern County Office of Education
* San Bernardino County Office of Education
* San Diego County Office of Education
* Madera Unified School District
* Modesto City Schools
* California Teachers Association
* California Federation of Teachers
* California Charter Schools Association
* California State Parent Teacher Association
* Policy Analysis for California Education
* The Education Trust-West
* Californians Together

The Advisory Committee provided input on multiple iterations of the project outline (Attachment 1) that defines the scope of the project and how the required guidance areas will be addressed in the DLGP.

The SCOE team is coordinating efforts from several organizations and individuals with expertise in the content to be covered by the DLGP. With expertise in educational technology, ISTE was secured as a lead partner in September 2020. They prepared a literature review to inform the content of the project and are also authoring several sections of the project. A small team of highly respected content-area experts will author the ELA, ELD, and mathematics portions of the DLGP.

The SCOE team presented an overview of the DLGP to the SBE as an agenda item in January 2021 to inform Board members of the scope and purpose of the project.

## Next Steps

As work on the written draft progresses, SCOE will continue to utilize the Advisory Committee for regular stakeholder feedback to fine-tune the draft. Additionally, SCOE will seek feedback outside of the formal Advisory Committee to ensure broader stakeholder input, including the input of teachers, students, and families.

Once adopted in May 2021, a web version of the DLGP guidance will be posted on the CDE Distance Learning web page so that LEAs may access these resources. ISTE is also designing an enhanced multimedia format for the online publication to be available in the fall of 2021, when LEAs may be seeking to revisit the guidance. CUE, whose mission is to transform teaching by “connecting educators with ideas, resources, and each other to use technology to prepare all students to succeed in a rapidly changing world,” is a key liaison to California educators and has been identified to support this effort. CUE will help identify teachers for recordings of interviews and illustrative examples which will be embedded in the enhanced multimedia format.

## Attachment(s)

**Attachment 1:** Distance Learning Curriculum and Instructional Guidance Project Outline (29 Pages)

# California Distance Learning Curriculum and Instructional Guidance Project Outline

This document provides a high-level outline of the content of the California Distance Learning Curriculum and Instructional Guidance Project. It includes the primary sections of the document, bulleted lists of topics to be developed within those sections, and some additional commentary.

## Table of Contents

## Foreword

* Call to action in Senate Bill (SB) 98 and purpose of the guide (i.e., sustainability of research-based, distance learning practices beyond the pandemic).
* The goal of the Distance Learning Curriculum and Instructional Guidance is to serve as a resource that will inform instructional practice with technology during and beyond the pandemic.
* The guide was developed under the direction of the Executive Director of the California State Board of Education. The development of this guide was led by Sacramento County Office of Education (SCOE) and International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) and included feedback and input from the Distance Learning Coalition and other stakeholder outreach sessions including parents, students, and teachers.

## Acknowledgments

## Executive Summary

## Introduction

* This guide begins by acknowledging the impact of COVID-19 on schools in 2020 and 2021 and focuses on the importance of working effectively and equitably to leverage distance learning pedagogy to ensure learning continuity. While COVID-19 served as the impetus of the guide’s creation, the guide serves as a robust resource to be utilized into the future.
* Despite its challenges, COVID-19 brings a unique opportunity to set the foundation for the future of education. California educators hold the potential to change the trajectory of the education system by identifying evidence-based policies to inform a sustainable learning model that allows for flexibility. In this model, digital learning is not just supplemental but instead, a key component for building student-centered learning opportunities and creating learning spaces that cultivate, support, and inspire lifelong, empowered learners.
* Built on a foundation of decades of research in distance learning and using frameworks aligned to standards for online and blended teaching best practices, this guide provides strategies and guidance for educators on how to develop and deliver high-quality learning experiences in online and blended learning environments. The guide reinforces fundamental elements of sound distance learning practices, such as the importance of interaction, community building, collaboration, meaningful assessment, active and authentic learning, student-centered learning, and more. The core sections of the guide connect the research to the areas and topics that are defined by SB 98 legislation.
* The topics in this guide were informed by a thorough literature review consisting of meta-analyses and systematic reviews and input from the Distance Learning Advisory Committee. In addition to the literature review, research-based standards are used as a framework to introduce the topics on distance learning. The standards include the National Standards for Quality Online Learning[[1]](#footnote-1) (NSQOL) (which includes the National Standards for Quality Online Teaching[[2]](#footnote-2), National Standards for Quality Online Courses[[3]](#footnote-3), and National Standards for Quality Online Programs[[4]](#footnote-4)), the ISTE Standards for Educators[[5]](#footnote-5), and the International Association for K-12 Online Learning (iNACOL, now Aurora Institute) Blended Learning Teacher Competency Framework[[6]](#footnote-6).
* The topics identified by SB 98, the guide’s literature review, and the research-based standards are thematically organized into seven areas of need that are integrated throughout the guide. These include the following:
  + ***Preparing Teachers for Online and Blended Teaching***- Research shows that teacher quality is the most influential factor in student success, no matter the learning environment. Using the sets of standards from NSQOL, ISTE, and iNACOL, this section provides guidance on professional responsibilities, teacher presence, learner engagement and motivation, digital citizenship, data-driven instruction, instructional design, and more to support online and blended teaching.
  + ***Ensuring Equity and Access*** - One of the most pressing needs in education is ensuring every student has equitable access to a quality education. This guide provides guidance related to ensuring equity and access in distance learning environments, such as Internet access, devices, and training on how to use the devices for learning. Considerations and guidance for vulnerable populations of students including students with disabilities, English learners, foster youth, and students experiencing homelessness will be provided.
  + ***Designing Meaningful, Supportive Online and Blended Learning Experiences***- Using a number of theoretical frameworks and guidelines (e.g., Universal Design for Learning, Meaningful Learning Framework, Interaction Theory, and Transactional Distance) and instructional design principles as a backdrop, this section focuses on providing practical guidance to educators who are designing online and blended learning experiences.
  + ***Assessing Students in Authentic Ways*** - Formative and summative assessments help inform students of areas they can improve. Assessments can also help educators inform their practice. The assessments section provides an overview of formative and summative assessment strategies to assess students in online and blended learning environments. Additionally, this section covers the use of data and learning analytics from technology tools to determine pedagogical effectiveness and inform instruction, including accelerated learning.
  + ***Infusing Social and Emotional Learning*** - Social and emotional learning (SEL) is a critical area of need in education and even more so in online and blended learning environments. This section provides a broad overview of how to embed social emotional supports into distance learning curricula, including resources created by the California Social Emotional Learning.
  + ***Cultivating Educator and Student Wellbeing***- Focusing on school as the center of wellness, this section introduces the Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child model and provides guidance on wellbeing and trauma-informed practices.
  + ***Addressing Critical Content Standards*** - Sections 2 and 3 are dedicated to the identification of critical standards in Mathematics and English Language Arts/English Language Development (ELA/ELD). For ELA, the critical standards are clustered within and across strands and organized by the five themes in the ELA/ELD Framework. For mathematics, the critical standards are organized around the “big ideas” proposed in the new California Mathematics Frameworks.
    - Mathematics
      * The goal of this section is to support teachers in moving to the teaching of meaningful mathematics, which enables students to develop a connected understanding. Teaching with meaning and connections means a different organization of content standards. The proposed approach in the new California Mathematics Framework for 2021 focuses on teaching the “big ideas” rather than organizing teaching around the small descriptions of mathematics set out in the standards.
    - English Language Arts/English Language Development
      * The work on the ELA/ELD section of the Distance Learning Curriculum and Instructional Guidance document is driven by ELA/ELD Framework, including overarching goals, grade-level standards, crosscutting themes, and instructional context. The key themes throughout this section focus on meaning-making, language development, effective expression, content knowledge, and foundational skills*.*
    - Technology serves as a facilitator of learning.
      * Integrated throughout these two sections is specific guidance on how to use technology to facilitate learning, including for assessment. In addition to guidance on technology, considerations specific to how to integrate SEL are included. This section is infused with guidance using strategies, examples, vignettes, recommendations for high-quality instructional materials, and/or teacher interviews. Additional resources, with an emphasis on highlighting those that are California-based, are included.
* The Introduction concludes with an overview of the structure of the guide.

## Section 1: Implementing Research-Based Distance Learning Principles and Practices

Section 1 consists of three parts, including Part A: Incorporating Instructional Design and Effective Pedagogy Using Technology; Part B: Assessing Student Achievement in Online and Blended Learning; and Part C: Fostering Healthy, Equitable, and Inclusive Digital Communities. This section is infused with guidance using strategies, examples, vignettes, and/or teacher interviews.

### Part A: Incorporating Instructional Design and Effective Pedagogy Using Technology

Part A focuses on instructional design and the use of technology for effective pedagogy and includes the first three areas of need—preparing teachers for online teaching, ensuring equity and access, and designing meaningful, supportive online and blended learning experiences.

#### Preparing Teachers for Online and Blended Teaching

* Research shows that teacher quality is the most influential factor in student success, no matter the learning environment. Schools, districts, and teacher preparation programs must prepare teachers for teaching in online and blended learning environments, as the pedagogy required in that space is different than that for traditional in-person classrooms.
* Using the sets of standards from NSQOL, ISTE, and iNACOL, now Aurora Institute, this section provides guidance on professional responsibilities, teacher presence, learner engagement and motivation, digital citizenship, data-driven instruction, instructional design, and more. To support implementation, guidance on how to incorporate the online teaching standards with the content area standards and frameworks is illustrated, including classroom connections and examples of these approaches in practice.
  + ***Professional responsibilities*** - Educators have a professional responsibility to reflect on their practices and continue learning in order to stay current with best practices in online and blended teaching (example: Leading Edge Certification <http://www.leadingedgecertification.org/online-and-blended-teacher.html> [NSQOT Standard A; ISTE Standard 1; BLTCF Domain 1 & 2].
  + ***Teacher presence*** - Teacher presence is critical for student success. Teachers facilitate interactions, develop and cultivate a learning community, and ensure cultural responsiveness [NSQOT Standard B & C; BLTCF Domain 3].
  + ***Learner engagement and motivation*** - As learning moves online or into blended environments, educators need to engage and motivate learners in different ways. This section focuses on ensuring students are familiar with technology through orientations, building relationships with students (through meetings and discussion-based assessments), working with students to personalize and track their goals, as well as the importance of incorporating student support structures. [NSQOT Standard D & F; ISTE Standard 4]
  + ***Digital citizenship*** - This section focuses on how to ensure academic integrity and intellectual property in online and blended learning environments [NSQOT Standard E; ISTE Standard 2 & 3].
  + ***Data-driven instruction*** - Using learning analytics embedded in technology software and hardware, educators can inform their instructional approaches and student support needs using data (NSQOT Standard G; ISTE Standard 7; BLTCF Domain 3 & 4).
  + ***Instructional design*** - This section introduces instructional design for online teaching, which will then be expanded in the designing meaningful, supportive online and blended learning environments section (NSQOT Standard H; ISTE Standard 5 & 6; BLTCF Domain 4).

#### Ensuring Equity and Access

* One of the most pressing needs in education is ensuring every student has equitable access to a quality education. This guide provides guidance related to ensuring equity and access in distance learning environments, such as Internet access, devices, and training on how to use the devices for learning.
  + Educators need access to what they need to teach effectively in a distance or blended learning modality (content-specific technology integration guidance, digital devices, Internet access, hardware, software, instructional resources, and professional learning for technology).
  + Students need access to what they need to learn effectively in a distance or blended learning modality (digital devices, Internet access, hardware, software, orientation to new learning environments and tools, developmentally appropriate instruction).
  + Educators provide choice for students for equity purposes in case students are sharing devices, working, caring for siblings, etc.
  + Parent/caregiver orientations can be used for those parents/caregivers who are supporting their children’s learning.
  + In any learning environment, meeting the needs of the most vulnerable populations of students is critical. This section includes strategies and guidance for supporting students with disabilities, English learners, foster youth, and youth experiencing homelessness. For the various student groups, classroom connections and examples of these approaches in practice are included.
    - ***Students with disabilities*** - As schools shifted to remote learning, many questions arose regarding how students with disabilities would be served. The Center for Online Learning and Students with Disabilities[[7]](#footnote-7) (now the Inclusive Digital Era Collaborative - iDEC[[8]](#footnote-8)) at the University of Kansas and the National Association of State Directors of Special Education[[9]](#footnote-9) (NASDSE) has been leading the way in helping state education agencies understand what support is needed for students with disabilities as schools, districts, and programs shift to online learning.
    - ***English learners*** - Using a variety of strategies and research-based best practices (e.g., screencasting, collaborative platforms, scaffolding, translators, graphic organizers, culturally and linguistically relevant materials), this section provides guidance for meeting the needs of English learners.
    - ***Foster youth and youth experiencing homelessness*** - In a study out of UC Berkeley School of Public Health[[10]](#footnote-10), foster youth and youth experiencing homelessness are suffering even more during the pandemic. This section provides guidance and considerations for meeting the needs of foster youth and students experiencing homelessness.

#### Designing Meaningful, Supportive Online and Blended Learning Experiences

* Using a number of theoretical frameworks and guidelines (Universal Design for Learning, Meaningful Learning Framework, Interaction Theory, and Transactional Distance) and instructional design principles as a backdrop, this section focuses on providing practical guidance to educators who are designing online and blended learning experiences.
  + Universal Design for Learning will be explained and strategies included for how to implement these principles in online and blended learning environments.
  + Meaning Learning Framework posits learning is active, intentional, constructive, authentic, and cooperative. This section provides examples of how this works in online and blended learning environments.
  + Key to online learning is the importance of fostering relationships, collaboration, and community. This is based on two of Moore’s theories, including Interaction Theory and Transactional Distance.
* General guidance on aggregating instructional time and independent work by grade span (e.g., Balancing asynchronous and synchronous instruction) is provided. Examples of schedules for synchronous and asynchronous learning time from districts and schools from California are shared. The guide also includes practice-based strategies for the types of learning activities for synchronous time and asynchronous times as well as how these learning activities are designed to better engage learners.
* Cognitive development considerations for early learning are also provided along with strategies and examples based on Piaget’s Stages of Cognitive Development and Vygotsky’s Zone of Proximal Development and other resources, including those developed by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). The guide offers broad research-based considerations as found in the literature review and as already outlined in the California Distance Learning Instruction Planning Guide (existing CDE guidance). Child development guidance suggests an inverse proportionality approach where younger students spend more time in synchronous activities and older students less time in synchronous, where younger students oftentimes need more guidance, structure, and support in online and blended learning environments (Rice, 2006; Vazquez & Straub, 2012).
* This section expands on instructional design standards (NSQOT Standard H; ISTE Standard 5 & 6; BLTCF Domain 4) and provides practical examples and strategies.
* Technology serves as a facilitator of learning. This section encourages educators to take an interdisciplinary approach to integrate multiple content areas (e.g., Mathematics, ELA, ELD, Arts, History–Social Science Standards, and Next Generation Science Standards [NGSS]).
* Learning management systems (LMS) have played a major role in providing a platform for learning to continue for educators and students everywhere. Districts have made large investments in LMSs. This section defines and provides examples of how LMS support the infrastructure of instructional delivery and assessment.

### Part B: Assessing Student Achievement in Online and Blended Learning

Part B focuses on assessments in online and blended learning and includes the fourth area of need—assessing students in authentic ways.

#### Assessing Students in Authentic Ways

This section focuses on how to implement formative, summative, and diagnostic assessments in online and blended learning environments to determine pedagogical effectiveness, understand support needs for students, inform and individualize instruction, and accelerate learning.

### Part C: Fostering Healthy, Equitable, and Inclusive Digital Communities

Part C concentrates on fostering healthy, equitable, and inclusive digital communities and includes the next two areas of need - infusing SEL and cultivating educator and student wellbeing.

#### Infusing Social and Emotional Learning

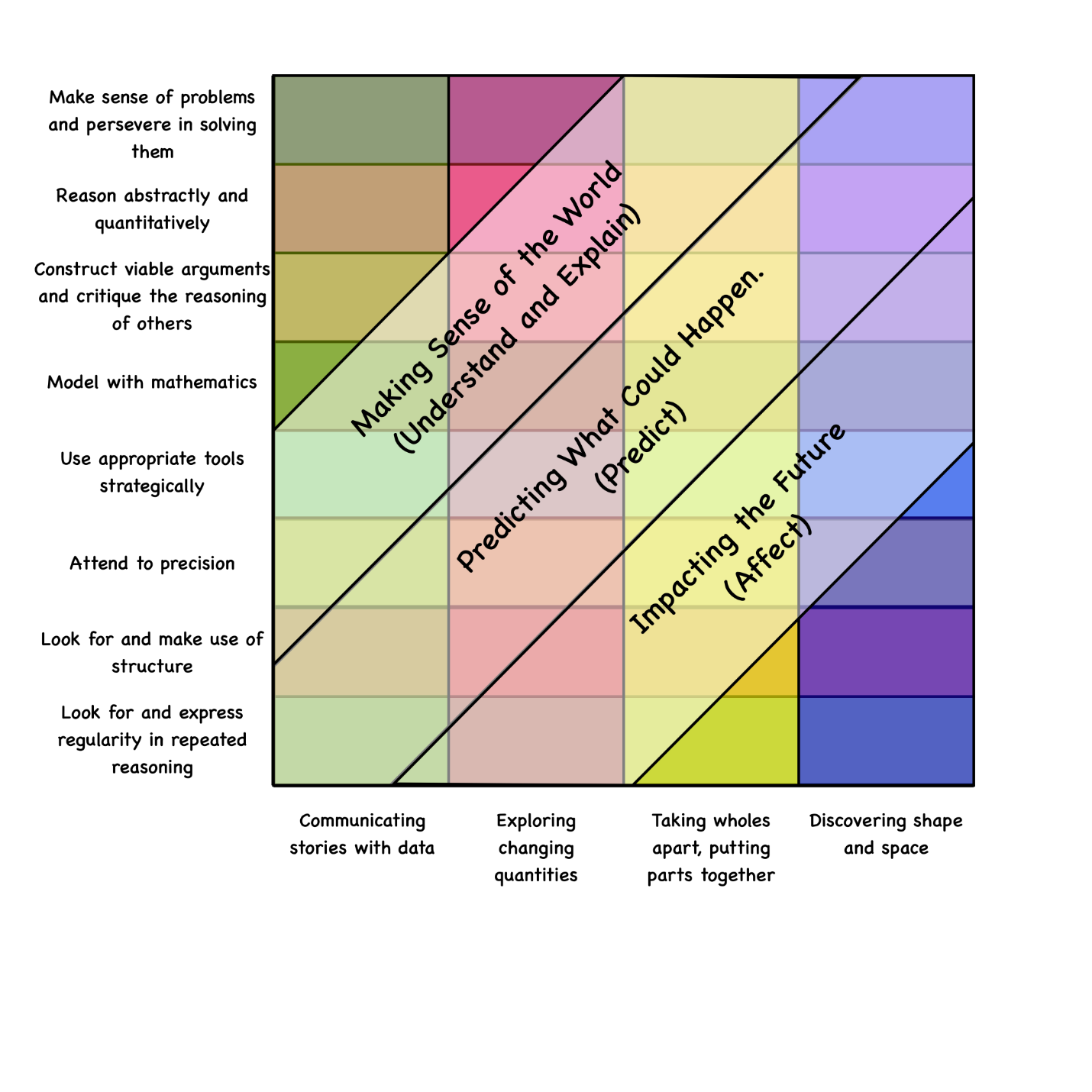
* SEL is a critical area of need in education and even more so in online and blended learning environments. This section provides a broad overview of social and emotional learning, including resources created by the California SEL Team, the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), Panorama, and a multi-tiered system of supports. This section focuses on embedding social-emotional supports in online and blended learning experiences.
* Support structures are vital for student success in online learning. There is a need for positive relationship development in online spaces among students, educators, families, caregivers, and the broader community.
  + Included in these supports are family and caregivers. Families and caregivers need guidance on how best to support their student(s), including orientation to digital tools. Roles and relationships between teachers and families and caregivers and how they work together to support learning can change when learning shifts online or to a blended setting. These vital relationships require constant communication and additional support structures to fully support whole-child learning, including but not limited to wraparound services.
  + Administrators need guidance on how best to lead in an online learning environment, including thinking creatively about the roles of educators, such as paraprofessionals, to help coach and mentor students in online learning environments.
  + As educator roles shift in online and blended learning environments, learning coaches or mentors can be incorporated for additional support.
  + Effective communication and student-teacher interactions can ultimately positively impact learning outcomes.

#### Cultivating Educator and Student Wellbeing

* SEL falls under the larger umbrella of wellbeing. This section provides guidance on other areas of wellbeing as outlined by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC) Whole Child approach or Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child (WSCC) model, a multifaceted approach that schools can take to promote health in schools. The ten areas included are as follows: Health Education; Nutrition Environment and Services; Employee Wellness; Social and Emotional School Climate; Physical Environment; Health Services; Counseling, Psychological, and Social Services; Community Involvement; Family Engagement; and Physical Education and Physical Activity.
* This section also includes guidance on culturally-responsive and trauma-informed practices, Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) as well as information about the Window of Tolerance and how to grow that Window using grounding and restorative practices, such as meditation and mindfulness.

## Section 2: Addressing Critical Standards in Mathematics

* The goal is to support teachers in moving to the teaching of meaningful mathematics, that enables students to develop a connected understanding. Teaching with meaning and connections means a different organization of content standards. The proposed approach in the draft 2021 California Mathematics Framework focuses on teaching the “big ideas” rather than organizing teaching around the small descriptions of mathematics set out in the standards[[11]](#footnote-11). The standards set out content in detail that is so specific it is often overwhelming for teachers, and leads publishers to write short, narrow questions that meet the individual standards. The approach is to raise the individual standards to a higher level – of “big ideas” that shows teachers the importance of the content and the ways it is connected to other content.
* The draft 2021 Mathematics Framework also sets out that mathematics work in classrooms should have a purpose and that rather than students working through questions for the sake of “doing math,” they should work on an approach of “investigating and connecting.” To do this, the authors recommend “drivers of investigation” that can guide investigations. The drivers are: **Making sense of the world** (understand and explain), **Predicting what could happen**, and **Impacting the future**. Figure 1 (below) shows these drivers and the ways they can be applied to any combination of content and mathematical practices. The graphic also shows the content connections from the draft 2021 Mathematics Framework: Communicating Stories with Data, Exploring Changing Quantities, Taking Wholes Apart and Putting Parts Together, and Discovering Shape and Space.

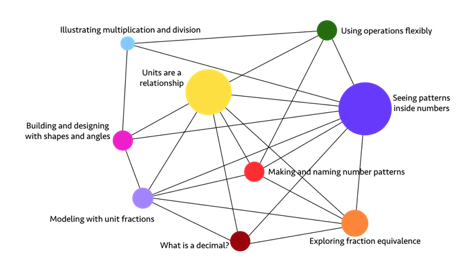
Figure 1. The Drivers of Investigation, Content Connections & Mathematical Practices from the 2021 *Mathematics Framework for California Public Schools, Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve*[Text Accessible Version of Figure 1](#Fig1text)

In the development of the Distance Learning Curriculum and Instructional Guidance, the authors are carefully reviewing the detailed standards and raising them to a higher level, which includes content, practices, and at times pedagogical advice. The following is an example from grade 3:

**Grade 3 Example – The Common Core Mathematics Standards**

* + **NF.2** Understand a fraction as a number on the number line; represent fractions on a number line diagram.  
    **a)** Represent a fraction 1/b on a number line diagram by defining the interval from 0 to 1 as the whole and partitioning it into b equal parts. Recognize that each part has size 1/b and that the endpoint of the part based at 0 locates the number 1/b on the number line  
    **b)** Represent a fraction a/b on a number line diagram by marking off lengths 1/b from 0. Recognize that the resulting interval has size a/b and that its endpoint locates the number a/b on the number line.
  + **NF.3** Explain equivalence of fractions in special cases and compare fractions by reasoning about their size Compare two fractions with the same numerator or the same denominator by reasoning about their size. Recognize that comparisons are valid only when the two fractions refer to the same whole. Record the results of comparisons with the symbols >, =, or <, and justify the conclusions, e.g., by using a visual fraction model.
* **Proposed bigger idea that encapsulates these standards:**
  + Compare unit fractions using different visual models, including linear models (e.g., number lines, tape measures) and area models (e.g., shape diagrams). Encourage student justification with visual models.
  + This follows work that was conducted for the authors’ K–8 book series that sets out the content of the K–8 standards as bigger ideas (<https://www.youcubed.org/resource/k-8-curriculum/>). For the guide, the authors intend to make similar connected maps of content. Figure 2 is from the book series for grade 4.

Figure 2. Big Idea Map from K-8 Book Series.



[Text Accessible Version of Figure 2](#Fig2text)

* Integrated throughout the section is specific guidance on how to use technology to facilitate learning in Mathematics, including for assessment. In addition to guidance on technology, considerations specific to how to integrate SEL are included.
* Technology serves as a facilitator of learning. This section encourages educators to take an interdisciplinary approach to integrate multiple content areas [e.g., Mathematics, ELA, ELD, Arts, History–Social Science Standards (HSS), and Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS)].
* This section is infused with guidance for Mathematics instruction using strategies, examples, vignettes, recommendations for high-quality instructional materials, and/or teacher interviews. Additional resources, with an emphasis on highlighting those that are California-based, are included.

## Section 3: Addressing Critical Standards in English Language Arts/Development

* The work on the ELA/ELD section of the Distance Learning Guidance document is driven by *ELA/ELD Framework[[12]](#footnote-12)*, particularly as captured in the Circles of Implementation graphic shown here (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Circles of Implementation from the 2014 ELA/ELD Framework



* In the outer ring, the **overarching goals** of ELA/ELD instruction are named. By the time California’s students complete high school they have:
  + developed the readiness for college, careers, and civic life;
  + attained the capacities of literate individuals;
  + acquired the skills for living and learning in the 21st century (technological competence, global competencies, communication, collaboration, critical and creative thinking); and
  + become broadly literate.
* In the center of the graphic are the **grade-level standards**, the year-by-year pathway toward achieving those overarching goals. Embedded within the ELA/Literacy standards are the CA ELD Standards, which were designed to amplify areas of English language development that are crucial for academic learning.
* Circling the standards are the **crosscutting themes** of the standards. These themes highlight the interconnections among the strands of reading, writing, listening and speaking and language. They represent bigger ideas. They are meaning making, language development, effective expression, content knowledge, and foundational skills.
* The field inside the crosscutting themes represents the **context** in which instruction occurs: It calls for instruction that is integrated, motivating, engaging, respectful, and intellectually challenging for all students at all grade levels.
* The crosscutting themes provide the framework and organizing structure for discussion of the critical ELA and related ELD standards. The cross-cutting themes of ELA/ELD instruction are described as follows:
  + *At every grade level, instruction focuses on*
    - **Meaning Making -** Meaning making is at the heart of ELA/literacy and ELD instruction. It is the central purpose for interacting with text, composing text, engaging in research, participating in discussion, speaking with others, and giving and listening to presentations. It is the reason for learning the foundational skills and for expanding language. Meaning making includes literal understanding but is not confined to it at any grade or with any student. Inference making and critical reading, writing, and listening are given substantial and explicit attention in every discipline. Among the contributors to meaning making are language, knowledge, motivation, comprehension monitoring, and in the case of reading and writing, the ability to recognize printed words and use the alphabetic code to express ideas.
    - **Language Development -** Language is the cornerstone of literacy and learning. It is with and through language that students learn; think; and express information, ideas, perspectives, and questions. The strands of the CA ELA/Literacy Standards—Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening, and Language—all have language at the core, as do the parts of the CA ELD Standards—Interacting in Meaningful Ways, Learning About How English Works, and Using Foundational Literacy Skills. Students enrich their language as they read, write, speak, and listen; interact with one another and learn about language; and engage with rich content in all disciplines. The foundational skills provide access to written language.
    - **Effective Expression -** Each strand of the CA ELA/Literacy Standards and each part of the CA ELD Standards includes attention to effective expression. Students learn to examine the author’s craft as they read, analyzing how authors use language, text structure, and images to convey information, influence, or evoke responses from readers. They learn to effectively express themselves as writers, discussion partners, and presenters, and they use digital media and visual displays to enhance their expression. They gain command over the conventions of written and spoken English, and they learn to communicate in ways appropriate for the purpose, audience, context, and task.
    - **Content Knowledge -** Content knowledge, which includes literary, cultural, and domain knowledge, is a powerful contributor to the comprehension of text and other sources of information and ideas. It also undergirds the ability to write effective opinions/arguments, narratives, explanatory/informational text, and other types of text; engage in meaningful discussions; and present ideas and information to others. It contributes significantly to language development, and it is fundamental to learning about how English works. Both sets of standards ensure that students can learn from informational texts and can share their knowledge as writers and speakers. An organized independent reading program contributes to knowledge building. Content knowledge has a powerful reciprocal relationship with the development of literacy and language.
    - **Foundational Skills -** Acquisition of the foundational skills enables students to independently read and use written language to learn about the world and themselves; experience extraordinary and diverse works of literary fiction and nonfiction; and share their knowledge, ideas, stories, and perspectives with others. Students who know how to decode, develop automaticity with an increasing number of words, and become fluent users of written language are best positioned to make significant strides in meaning making, language development, effective expression, and content knowledge. At the same time, attention to those themes provides the very reason for learning about the alphabetic code and propels progress in the foundational skills.
* Presentation of the Standards
  + Critical standards, as well as supporting standards, have been identified for each of the five themes. They are organized in such a way as to reveal their relationships to one another and one or more themes. For example, RL/RI.K.1 (“With prompting and support, ask and answer questions about key details in a text”) and SL.K.2 (“Confirm understanding of a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media by asking and answering questions about key details and requesting clarification if something is not understood”) are highly related and can be addressed at the same time instructionally, and so they are clustered together in a cell. These, along with ELD Standard PI.K.5.Ex (“Demonstrate active listening to read-alouds and oral presentations by asking and answering questions, with oral sentence frames and occasional prompting and support”) are identified as priority standards. Within a cell, bulleted comments provide brief instructional guidance, and supporting standards are identified, as in Figure 4.

Figure 4. Teach the Language Arts as Meaning Making Processes.

**Teach the Language Arts as Meaning Making Processes**

**RL/RI.K.1 With prompting and support, ask and answer questions about key details in a text.**

**SL.K.2 Confirm understanding of a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media by asking and answering questions about key details and requesting clarification if something is not understood.**

**ELD.PI.K.5.Ex Demonstrate active listening to read-alouds and oral presentations by asking and answering questions, with oral sentence frames and occasional prompting and support.**

* Text-dependent questions prompt children to attend closely to texts; questions are developed to support young listeners’ understanding of the characters, settings and major events in stories (RL.K.3, 9), and the main topic, key ideas, events, ideas, and information in informational text (RI.K.2-3, 7), including identifying basic similarities and differences between two texts on the same topic (RI.K.9; ELD.PI.K.6.Ex).
* Importantly, children not only answer questions posed by the teacher, they are encouraged to ask questions about a text or information presented through other media. Comprehension monitoring is evident when they ask questions to clarify meaning; engagement is evident when they question a character’s behavior, for example, or ask about information provided in a text or otherwise presented (SL.K.3).
* Children should engage as listeners and readers with a range of text types, including an equal balance of narrative and informational texts, as well as other sources of information.
* All children participate in read-aloud experiences with increasingly complex texts (i.e., for first graders, those in the grades 2-3 band or higher). Questions guide and support children’s comprehension.
* Exposure to a wide range of texts contributes to children’s literary, cultural, and domain knowledge as well as their familiarity with various text structures and features (RL/RI.K.5; ELD.PII.K.1.Ex)—all of which contribute to meaning making. Teachers ensure that all children see themselves in texts.
* Integrated throughout the section is specific guidance on how to use technology to facilitate learning, including for assessment. In addition to guidance on technology, considerations specific to how to integrate SEL are included.
* Technology serves as a facilitator of learning. This section encourages educators to take an interdisciplinary approach to integrate multiple content areas [e.g., Mathematics, ELA, ELD, Arts, History-Social Science Standards, and Next Generation Science Standards].
* This section is infused with guidance for ELA and ELD instruction using strategies, examples, vignettes, recommendations for high-quality instructional materials, and/or teacher interviews. Additional resources, with an emphasis on highlighting those that are California-based, are included.

## Conclusion

The guide concludes with a vision for the future of teaching and learning in the state of California. Based on the information covered in the guide, implications and recommendations for system-level leaders are included in this section. These implications and recommendations will follow a similar framework of the seven areas of need as identified in the Introduction to include:

* Preparing Teachers for Online and Blended Teaching
* Ensuring Equity and Access
* Designing Meaningful, Supportive Online and Blended Learning Experiences
* Assessing Students in Authentic Ways
* Infusing Social and Emotional Learning
* Cultivating Educator and Student Wellbeing
* Addressing Critical Content Standards Using Technology

## Glossary of Key Terms

## [References](#References)

## Appendix A - Full Literature Review

## Appendix B - Section ResourcesReferences

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## Text Accessible Versions of the Graphics for Section 2

Figure 1. The Drivers of Investigation, Content Connections & Mathematical Practices from the 2021 *Mathematics Framework for California Public Schools, Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve*

Three Drivers of Investigation (DIs) provide the “why” of learning mathematics:

* Making Sense of the World (Understand and Explain)
* Predicting What Could Happen (Predict)
* Impacting the Future (Affect)

The DIs overlay and pair with four categories of Content Connections (CCs), which provide the “how and what” mathematics (CA-CCSSM) is to be learned in an activity:

* Communicating stories with data
* Exploring changing quantities
* Taking wholes apart, putting parts together
* Discovering shape and space

The DIs work with the Standards for Mathematical Practice to propel the learning of the ideas and actions framed in the CCs in ways that are coherent, focused, and rigorous. The Standards for Mathematical Practice are:

* Make sense of problems and persevere in solving them
* Reason abstractly and quantitatively
* Construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others
* Model with mathematics
* Use appropriate tools strategically
* Attend to precision
* Look for and make use of structure
* Look for and express regularity in repeated reasoning

[Return to Figure 1](#Fig1)

**Figure 2. Big Idea Map from K-8 Book Series**

The graphic illustrates the connections and relationships of some grade-four mathematics concepts. Direct connections include:

* Seeing patterns and inside numbers directly connects to: Using operations flexibly, Illustrating multiplication and division, Units are a relationship, Building and designing with shapes and angles, Modeling with unit fractions, Making and naming number patterns, and Exploring fraction experience
* Using operations flexibly also directly connects to: Illustrating multiplication and division, Units are a relationship, Making and naming number patterns
* Illustrating multiplication and division also directly connects to: Building and designing with shapes and angles
* Building and designing with shapes and angles also directly connects to: Units are a relationship, Modeling with unit fractions

[Return to Figure 2](#Fig2)

1. [https://www.nsqol.org/](https://www.nsqol.org/" \o "The National Standards  for Quality Online Learning) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. <https://www.nsqol.org/the-standards/quality-online-teaching/> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. <https://www.nsqol.org/the-standards/quality-online-courses/> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. <https://www.nsqol.org/the-standards/quality-online-programs/> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
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6. <https://aurora-institute.org/wp-content/uploads/iNACOL-Blended-Learning-Teacher-Competency-Framework.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
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10. [https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7495245](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7495245/)/ [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Information on the draft 2021 Mathematics Framework is available at <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/ma/cf/> [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/rl/cf/elaeldfrmwrksbeadopted.asp> [↑](#footnote-ref-12)