

<b>Subject:</b> <i>Universal Supports for Student Wellness</i>	<b>Legal Reference:</b> • None
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*This Technical Advisory continues the New Hampshire Department of Education’s communication regarding the provision of remote instruction in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This technical advisory gives a brief overview of universal strategies to support student wellness and direct access to strategies, resources and information to support local school districts, educators, and families.*

### **What is Student Wellness?**

Student wellness is the recognition by schools, districts, and educational professionals that there are many factors that impact a student’s academic attainment. It is an approach that focuses on supporting the whole child. The dimensions of wellness include: Emotional, Personal, Intellectual, Physical, Environmental, Occupational, and Social factors.

Over the past several years, many NH school districts have begun to support student wellness through the development of Multi-Tiered Systems of Support for Behavioral Health and Wellness (MTSS-B). MTSS-B is a process by which these districts, in partnership with students, families, and other community providers, organize teams to analyze community data and make a plan to identify, install, and evaluate strategies to support the student body.

### **Student Wellness and COVID-19**

The COVID-19 pandemic and associated public health response are likely to have a major impact on the strategies, supports, and programs developed within local MTSS-B processes and frameworks. An orientation to remote instruction may result in lost access and availability of services and supports. In addition, the existence of the pandemic itself may increase the need for such services and supports.

The New Hampshire Department of Education’s Bureau of Student Wellness, Office of Social and Emotional Wellness (OSEW), seeks to provide resources and technical assistance to school districts to work collaboratively with their community to respond to the needs of students through MTSS-B. The following information is intended to support local MTSS-B processes and structures. Because MTSS-B is a locally driven process and framework, there is no one size fits all approach and this information may be taken in whole or in part based on the identified needs of each community.

### **Resources and Information**

The universal tier of MTSS-B focuses on identifying broad-based, community-wide strategies to increase student resiliency and support the development of individual skills and competencies. The following resources and strategies are organized accordingly:

#### ***External Assets***

- ***Support***
  1. Encourage students to prepare and share meals with their families. Provide daily conversation starters. Make up your own or find examples from the Family Dinner Project: <https://thefamilydinnerproject.org/>.
  2. Co-host a “Virtual Community Conversation” with your municipality, Community Mental Health Center (<https://www.dhhs.nh.gov/dcbcs/bbh/documents/list-map.pdf>), and Regional Public Health Network (<https://www.dhhs.nh.gov/dphs/rphn/index.htm>).

3. Consider starting a Ripple Kindness Community Project: <https://ripplekindness.org/community-project/>
  4. Create a “Virtual Lunch Room” for students to connect and share their thoughts and experiences with peers during remote instruction. This web-based forum should be monitored by adults in the same way a typical lunch-room would to ensure safety and appropriateness.
  5. Provide and staff a telephone help line for families to support them and answer their questions. Information to be provided includes: academic content, guidance on social and emotional learning, and support with information technology.
- *Empowerment*
    1. Keep your students up-to-date on the efforts being taken by district staff to support them during remote instruction. Share selfies of teachers, administrators, and support staff engaging in daily tasks.
    2. Ask students for their feedback and recommendations on how to improve remote instruction and how to improve the transition to and from a remote model.
    3. COVID-19 and the response are hitting the elderly particularly hard. Start a letter writing campaign between students and local nursing homes or senior centers. <https://www.edutopia.org/blog/teaching-students-honor-elderly-maurice-elias>
    4. Provide and staff a direct help line for students to report issues of safety and access services and supports related to basic needs. Staff should be trained in mandated reporting (<https://knowandtell.org/>) and familiar with local community resources (<http://www.211nh.org/>).
  - *Boundaries and Expectations*
    1. Help families understand their role in setting and supporting boundaries within a remote instruction model: <https://childmind.org/article/teaching-kids-boundaries-empathy/>
    2. Educate families about school rules and boundaries. Provide detailed outline of behavioral expectations and community values.
    3. Write a press release for your local news outlet describing the district’s response to remote instruction and outline five opportunities for community members to support students. <https://class-pr.com/blog/how-to-write-a-press-release/>
    4. Identify opportunities to highlight both adult and peer role models. Start a “You’ve Been Caught Program” [https://www.thesunchronicle.com/news/local\\_news/you-ve-been-caught-program-teams-foxboro-police-with-patriot/article\\_ec5c65fc-6522-5ead-b95a-74a7f169293e.html](https://www.thesunchronicle.com/news/local_news/you-ve-been-caught-program-teams-foxboro-police-with-patriot/article_ec5c65fc-6522-5ead-b95a-74a7f169293e.html)
    5. Define and communicate high behavioral expectations for students to them and their families. Ensure support in attaining the expectations for those who need it.
  - *Constructive Use of Time*
    1. Ask students to document their remote instruction experience in video, audio, visual art, or the written word. Plan a gallery showing of pieces to be held once traditional instruction resumes.
    2. Connect with your local recreation department, community center, or Boys and Girls Club. Publicize opportunities to engage in existing recreation opportunities or utilize community resources such as sports fields, basketball courts, and playgrounds. Learn more about why outdoor play matters: <https://www.naeyc.org/resources/pubs/yc/may2019/outdoor-play-is-essential>
    3. Encourage students to explore local walking and hiking trails (<https://www.alltrails.com/>) including the NH State Parks (<https://www.nhstateparks.org/>).
    4. Support the use of mindfulness practices. <https://www.mindful.org/meditation/mindfulness-getting-started/>

## ***Internal Assets***

- *Commitment to Learning*
  1. Provide frequent feedback to students about their progress during remote instruction.
  2. Ensure daily check-ins for all students per Ed 306.18 of the NH Minimum Standards for Public School Approval. <https://www.education.nh.gov/sites/g/files/ehbemt326/files/inline-documents/2020/er-ed306-18a7-amend.pdf>
  3. Provide links to your local library and the NH State Library (<https://www.nh.gov/nhsl/>) to students to encourage reading for pleasure.
- *Positive Values*
  1. Design a virtual learning environment that responsibility and integrity: <https://www.virtuallearningalliance.org/instructor-role-virtual-classroom/>
  2. Ensure open and equitable classroom discussion and connection: <https://www.millersville.edu/cae/teaching-and-learning/fostering-classroom-discussion.php>
- *Social Competencies*
  1. Use Literacy-Based Approaches to Promote Social Competence: [https://medicine.yale.edu/childstudy/scholasticcollab/what/YaleScholasticFamilyResilienceWhitePaper\\_342183\\_284\\_42503\\_v1.pdf](https://medicine.yale.edu/childstudy/scholasticcollab/what/YaleScholasticFamilyResilienceWhitePaper_342183_284_42503_v1.pdf)
  2. Explore and share the Jesse Lewis Choose Love Curriculum: <https://www.jesselewischooselove.org/>
  3. Identify opportunities to infuse social emotional learning into existing content: <https://drc.casel.org/>
  4. Support cultural awareness in your virtual classroom: <https://www.theedadvocate.org/6-ways-teachers-can-foster-cultural-awareness-in-the-classroom/>
- *Positive Identity*
  1. Promote student advocacy and engagement within the confines of remote instruction. Respond in a timely and supportive manner to all requests and suggestions made by the student body.
  2. Support students to craft three short-term learning goals during remote instruction. Create mechanisms to track and support progress: [http://castprofessionallearning.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/CAST-Professional-Learning-udl\\_top\\_10\\_learning\\_goals.pdf](http://castprofessionallearning.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/CAST-Professional-Learning-udl_top_10_learning_goals.pdf)
  3. Support those students nearing graduation to connect their virtual experience to their future plans. Be especially empathetic to feelings of loss, mourning, and anxiety connected to unmet expectations.

### **For questions related to this Technical Advisory, please contact:**

Michelle Myler, Administrator  
Bureau of Student Wellness  
Tel. 603-271-4018  
Email: michelle.myler@doe.nh.gov

Kelly Untiet, Administrator  
Office of Social & Emotional Wellness  
Tel. 603-271-2295  
Email: kelly.untiet@doe.nh.gov