

# Family Partnership Strategy Playbook

*Built by the PK-12 Alliance, a partnership among families, learners, educators and community based organizations*



Facilitated by the



NORTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF  
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION



## What are these strategy briefs and where did they come from?

In May 2020, Superintendent Baesler and the Family Engagement Team of the Department of Public Instruction formed the PK-12 Alliance, a team of family members, educators, and community leaders, with the goal of building better, more responsive relationships between families and educators to support each PK-12 learner's success.

When COVID thrust all of us into remote learning, it also put families in a position to have deeper insights for educators about how we can work together as real partners in learning. To be sure we had the opportunity to learn from a wide range of families, Alliance members conducted interviews with educators, caregivers and students, especially focusing on people who are typically not engaged effectively by schools and districts.

The Alliance used a design process that began with a focus on learners and then asked how solutions that are good for learners could be designed so they were also good for families and educators. The result is a set of innovations that have the potential to improve the experience of all stakeholders. This collection of strategy briefs aims to share these innovative ideas with all of North Dakota. Our hope is that both educators and family members can read these briefs and become inspired to try something similar in their community. We encourage teams to begin with "small bites", attempting these innovations in small practical ways and growing them from there. We also encourage local teams to reflect on how each innovation would work for their learners, their families and their educators.

### Learners

- How would this strategy help address what learners tell us are their greatest challenges with learning?

### Families

- How would this strategy help address what families tell us are their greatest challenges as they seek to support their learners?
- Is there a way to design this strategy so that it really takes advantage of our community's resources

### Educators

- Is there something about this strategy that is also good for educators?
- Are there parts of this that may be difficult for educators? How can we make the strategy sustainable for teachers?



## Strategy #1: The Point Person



### Who is this strategy for?

**Learners who say things like:** "There are so many different assignments and so many different programs I am supposed to be using on my computer. I just feel overwhelmed because I have different kinds of questions. I end up emailing different people, but then I get different direction or advice from each of them and honestly, sometimes, I end up feeling even more confused."

**Family members who say things like:** "When I am trying to help my son and daughter, the biggest issue is that I just don't know how to get help in a way that doesn't bother a whole bunch of people and gets us help when we need it. For example, sometimes we can't get the something like a video to work. My son and daughter each have a different person we are supposed to call when the technology doesn't work, so we call them. But then a lot of times the tech people can't fix it because the problem has to do with how the teacher set something up. So then they call the teacher and we go around and around. I know everyone at the school is working hard and I know they are probably busy with more important things than helping us to get a video to play. But I am also really worried about whether I am letting my kids down."

### Description of this Partnership Strategy:

To help students keep **MAINTAINING LEARNING EFFORT** while they need help (parents working, multiple children at home, a lag in the time it takes a teacher to respond)...Make sure that **students are a part of a small group, and that each small group has a point person**. The point person is an adult who feels responsible for student relationships, learning about any needs and issues the student or family might have, identifying the right supports and making necessary connections. This person could be a school staff member, a room parent, or a community partner.

This idea was designed to address a learner need, but if done with awareness of the needs of both families and educators, it can be something that helps address key problems for them as well. If implemented thoughtfully, this strategy can positively impact each group in these ways:

### Learners

- The learner knows just who to call when they get stuck. The engagement keeps them going.
- The learner can get the technical and instructional help they need.
- The learner has one person who engages in a deep trusting relationship with them.
- The learner is part of a smaller learning community where they are supported and accountable, like PLCs for teachers.

### Families

- Less stress is put on families because they are aware of ways to access help.
- Families feel less worried about letting their child down when they themselves are not available to help.

### Educators

- Educators feel reassured that they have help supporting their students.
- Educators have support with planning and coordinating that may have overwhelmed them in the spring.
- Teachers can be in close partnership with the small number of point people for their learners. This makes communication about changes easier and more effective.

# How to try this innovation in your community:

## What overarching questions need to be considered to implement this innovation?

- In your community, who can play these roles (instructional staff, non-instructional staff, community based organizations, room parents or existing mentors)?
- What methods of rapid, responsive communication are available to your system? (eg Google Chat, MS Teams chat, ZenDesk, etc.)
- Who are your most marginalized students and families and how could this approach focus on them?
- Might you want to have some student groups be larger or smaller to vary the level of support to match learner and family need?
- What are the existing structures to connect families to one another? Could one of those systems be used in this way?

## “A Day In the Life” with this Innovation:

In the table below, we lay out what a “day in the life” of the student interacting with the innovation might look like and what might be needed to make this work. This vision for the innovation is NOT meant to be the only way it could work. The key components are small groups of students and a point person who is always up to date regarding current expectations, supports and who to contact by topic. Local innovators will need to adapt these examples to make it fit their local context.

Student	Interaction with Support	What Would be Needed
<p>A 4th grader who is stuck on both the technology not working AND has a conceptual challenge with connecting fractions to decimals.</p>	<p>I’m stuck. I call my point person, who is a person at the Boys and Girls Club (BGC). She pulls up the information she has about my device profile and walks me through how to restart it and do a network reset. She waits while I login to the LMS.</p> <p>It doesn’t work, so she makes a three way call with the IT person at the district, who resets my login. The person at the BGC stays on and asks about the math concept I was working on when my computer problem started. She can’t quite explain it to me, but helps me write an email to my teacher, including some screenshots of my work.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shared access to student device data</li> <li>• Basic training on tech support and mandatory reporting</li> <li>• Flow chart for service and support</li> <li>• A call sheet/phone tree</li> <li>• A learning space for the point people to talk with one another to share insights, processes, and approaches</li> <li>• A way for the system to learn insights from the point people</li> </ul>
 <p>A 7th grader who has not yet logged into virtual school.</p>	<p>My mom talked to me yesterday about school. Some volunteer from my school called her, and all three of us got on the phone today. He was ok I guess. I thought he was going to give us both a hard time about me not logging in, but he just asked me about what I was interested in, and seemed to actually care what I said.</p> <p>ALTERNATIVE: My mom is too much. She said that she joined a “pod” of 5 other families that she talks to once a week. She seems to really like it, they are laughing and sort of complaining about us together. She said that she got some advice from another parent about how to make my work more interesting, and that we were going to work on it together. I guess she’s not going to let me slide on not logging in. But I just think it’s so boring, but it sounds like other kids in her “pod” are having the same issues, so I guess it’s good to know I’m not the only one. I guess I’ll try to log in tomorrow. Sounds like my mom is going to check in NON-STOP about this.</p>	<p>If parents are going to play this role, there are protocols that need to be followed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents are “official” volunteers with the school.</li> <li>• They have cleared whatever safety protocols are needed for in-school volunteering, or field trip chaperoning, or mentoring.</li> </ul> <p>Other needs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• System for tracking interactions</li> <li>• A physical or virtual way for this person to gather with individuals or the small group</li> </ul>



## Strategy #2: Learning Compacts



### Who is this strategy for?

**Learners who say things like:** "I'm not always sure exactly what my teacher can do to help me. I know he is working hard and I don't want to ask for something he really can't do. But sometimes my work doesn't make sense and I need a different explanation or a different lesson. I just don't know what is reasonable or respectful to ask for "

**Family members who say things like:** "Sometimes I can't tell what is really required for my daughter, and what people are giving her as optional. I know that they want to be sure she has enough to do, but there are days when I can't help her as much, or she is having a rough day, and on those days we really need to know what she has to do. I wish we knew in general what her school really expected of her".

### Description of this Partnership Strategy:

To help students **BUILD AGENCY** while they learn to work independently, we need to provide them with a roadmap of guideposts and options. This strategy asks that schools develop "learning compacts" with each student and their family. These compacts contain some universal information that tells each learner in a school or class what the basic requirements are, and what supports they can count on from their teacher and school. The compacts also give each student a place to set their own goals and make their own commitments about how they can get work done. The individual student's goals and plans are aligned to their specific needs. The educators, the student, and the family work together to create the compact and revisit it over time to see what is working and how they might want to make adjustments. The compact could include goals and supports that are academic, technical, or emotional and could be implemented in conjunction with the "Support Point Person" innovation [[link here](#)].

This idea was designed to address a learner need, but if done with awareness of the needs of both families and educators, it can be something that helps address key problems for them as well. If implemented thoughtfully, this strategy can positively impact each group in these ways:

### Learners

- The learner is understood as a person with unique needs.
- The learner has help getting the technical and instructional help they need.
- The learner feels supported and accountable.
- The learner understands expectations and has specific goals to work toward.
- The learner has a vested interest in the goals because they have helped to create them.

### Families

- Families feel they are in partnership with the teacher and school from the beginning.
- Families know how to check in with students and educators about progress.
- Families understand what the expectations are and what goals their student is working toward.

### Educators

- Educators feel supported by parents and know parents will let them know if they need help. "Mutual trust"
- Educators feel support from leadership and know what universal assistance they have from their school to manage all their students' needs.
- Educators will see students showing a vested interest in the goals because they have helped to create them.

# How to try this innovation in your community:

## What overarching questions need to be considered to implement this innovation?

- In your community, how standardized do you want the template for a compact to be between teachers and schools?
- What assessments or techniques will you use to determine student needs?
- Who are your most marginalized students and families and how could this approach focus on them?
- What are the structures that already exist to create individualized learning plans and how might you build on those?
- Where would the compact be housed for easy access by students, families, and educators?
- How would the compacts be updated and how often?
- How will compacts be adapted for individual needs and age groups?

## “A Day In the Life” with this Innovation:

In the table below, we lay out what a “day in the life” of the student interacting with the innovation might look like and what might be needed to make this work. This vision for the innovation is NOT meant to be the only way it could work. The key components are small groups of students and a point person who is always up to date regarding current expectations, supports and who to contact by topic. Local innovators will need to adapt these examples to make it fit their local context.

Student	Interaction with Support	What Would be Needed
<p>A 4th grader who is reading at the 2nd grade level but loves math and baseball</p>	<p>I had a video chat with my Dad and my teacher today. We talked about where I felt the most and the least confident. I said that I liked the math part of class, and that I am most interested in baseball. I don't like reading much, unless it's about baseball, or other sports are okay too. We set a goal that I would get to go deeper into math, and that I would focus my reading on baseball related things. Dad said that he would work with the teacher to find good articles and books on baseball, and I need to focus on reading more outside of school. We agreed that when I got stuck, I could email my teacher. Dad and I practiced and printed out my compact and I put it up next to my desk.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A template for the compact</li> <li>• A script or approach for the conversation used to create compacts</li> <li>• Training on asset-based framing</li> <li>• Agreements between teachers and support staff on what roles they will each play in the universal portion of the compact</li> </ul>
 <p>A 7th grader who has not yet logged into virtual school.</p>	<p>I have been avoiding logging into my classes. My dad is really pushing me. We have been getting calls from one of my teachers, Sarah. When she called my dad this morning, he tracked me down and the three of us had a conversation. Sarah wanted us to put together a compact.</p> <p>At first I didn't like the idea of that very much. I have been given contracts before &amp; they usually just say what I need to do and what the consequences will be if I don't. But she explained that a compact is different it is our plan. My compact has me using videos and doing work in math totally on my own. I like math and I know I can do that work on my own. But I did agree to sign in each day at my scheduled time for Science and English. The teachers check in at the start of class each day and are following a pattern: 1) login at the start of class, 2) small group work together online, and 3) come back together at the end of class. I think that will be OK. We are going to try it for two weeks and then check in with Sarah again to talk about how it went.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Template of schedule options to create a schedule with the times the student would log in to check in and when the student will work on the other subjects on their own</li> <li>• A routine for the student and teacher staying in touch and tracking progress with independent tasks</li> <li>• A routine for checking in on how the plan is going and making adjustments to the compact</li> <li>• A way to ensure the family can also track progress</li> </ul>



## Strategy #3: Prioritizing Standards



### Who is this strategy for?

**Learners who say things like:** "My work feels like I just have a really long list of things I need to do, but I am not sure whether one piece of work is supposed to be connected to another. It just doesn't feel like the work is adding up to me really getting to know big new ideas"

**Family members who say things like:** "My son struggles to do work when he doesn't know what he is supposed to be learning. He also really likes to focus on one thing long enough that he totally gets it. I see him disengage when he has a long list of things to do and he doesn't understand why each piece is important or what it is building to."

### Description of this Partnership Strategy:

When schools take the long list of standards and highlight a small number of "priority standards" that will be the focus for a period of time, it makes it easier for learners to access learning. The shorter list of standards simplifies the framework that a student uses to organize their work and their time. It also makes it easier for educators to personalize learning and offer a range of choices to each student related to each standard.

This idea was designed to address a learner need, but if done with awareness of the needs of both families and educators, it can be something that helps address key problems for them as well. If implemented thoughtfully, this strategy can positively impact each group in these ways:

### Learners

- Learners will understand the goals and purpose of learning.
- Learners can focus on smaller objectives/tasks at a time.

### Families

- Families will receive the same information as students.
- When standards are be chunked and shared in a timely fashion; it prevents families from feeling overloaded.

### Educators

- Having a prioritized group of standards allows teachers not to rush ahead of the pace of students' learning.
- It is easier to help learners and families understand a shorter prioritized list of standards.
- When students and parents understand outcomes, giving quality feedback is easier.

# How to try this innovation in your community:

## What overarching questions need to be considered to implement this innovation?

- What prioritization of learning goals already exists (eg. "Power Standards" or "I Can" statements)? Are standards posted in the classroom or shared with students and parents?
- How can educators be given time and support to create shared lists of "Power Standards"?
- Who might be included in a discussion about what learning goals are most powerful for this community; educators, students, and/or principals?
- How can this innovation be designed to be especially supportive of students and families that are traditionally marginalized?

## "A Day In the Life" with this Innovation:

In the table below, we lay out what a "day in the life" of the student interacting with the innovation might look like and what might be needed to make this work. This vision for the innovation is NOT meant to be the only way it could work. The key components are small groups of students and a point person who is always up to date regarding current expectations, supports and who to contact by topic. Local innovators will need to adapt these examples to make it fit their local context.

Student	Interaction with Support	What Would be Needed
<p>4th grader who is stuck on both the technology not working AND has a conceptual challenge with connecting fractions to decimals</p>	<p>I like math sometimes. It feels like the same thing over and over again though. We learn a new math skill, and the teacher shows us how to do it. Then, we practice it together, and I practice by myself.</p> <p>This week has felt different though. We are learning about fractions, and we have been trying to a bunch of different things with them. Our class has been staying on fractions for longer than we usually do.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A bank of options of work/assignments for students who have different skills or will approach the power standard differently</li> <li>• Find a way to meet with the students who are struggling at a different time; in small groups to re-teach or expand</li> </ul>
 <p>11th grade class is reading through a piece of literature. It is taking this student longer to get through the chapters than others efficiently.</p>	<p>I don't understand this book. I keep reading these big words and the teacher keeps moving on. I can't keep up. I don't know how to ask questions and it takes me too long to look up all of the vocabulary words, much less answer the questions in order to meet with the class. It seems like some I've talked to are liking the book and understanding it.</p> <p>Starting next week we are meeting in small Zoom groups. This way the teacher can check how we are doing more closely and see if we have questions. I like that. I especially like to have students in my group who are at the same pace and nobody really knows that except the teacher and the students in my group.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Zoom or other method for connecting virtually needs to be in place, and everyone needs directions so they know how to connect</li> <li>• The school or teacher needs to create the schedule for small group zooms including group breakouts based on needs; (students who have mastered have more independent literature circle analysis while students who struggle have more centered learning target discussions).</li> <li>• The district will need a stable and easy to navigate district technology platform.</li> </ul>



## Strategy #4: Productivity Skills



### Who is this strategy for?

**Learners who say things like:** "I know that I have a certain amount of time and a list of things to do, but I have a hard time knowing what to do first, or how much time it should take me to do each thing in my list." OR "I know my teachers email address, and I know that I can email when I am confused, but I don't really know what to say. Sometimes I don't have a specific question, I am just confused overall. How do I write an email asking for help when I just don't know how to even get started?"

**Family members who say things like:** "If I can't check in with my son every ten minutes, he doesn't get anything done. Sometimes I think he is distracted, but other times I think it is just that his list of things to do is long and he gets sort of paralyzed trying to decide what to do, or what to do next."

### Description of this Partnership Strategy:

To help students **BUILD AGENCY** while they learn to work independently, develop a short list of "productivity skills" that describe problem solving habits, technical skills and habits of mind that will be critical for future success during remote or hybrid learning. They could range from using the help function on an app to handling a difficult moment with a new skill. With productivity skills clearly defined, teachers can design lessons to model skills and give students practice with those skills.

This idea was designed to address a learner need, but if done with awareness of the needs of both families and educators, it can be something that helps address key problems for them as well. If implemented thoughtfully, this strategy can positively impact each group in these ways:

### Learners

- The learner understands what skills they need to succeed.
- The learner has established structures and guidance in place.
- Common understandings exist at home and school.
- The learner has multiple sources of support when they are feeling stuck or frustrated.

### Families

- Families can reinforce these skills in daily life outside of school time.
- Families can play an active role in supporting the learner.
- Families will become aware of strategies to help their child in school and beyond.
- Families may see that children use some of these skills to also become more independent with home tasks.

### Educators

- Educators can refer to these skills during class.
- Educators may be able to spend less time walking students through the skills and can rely more on peer mentoring and self-regulation.
- Educators may be able to better identify and support learners who struggle because their underdeveloped productivity skills are getting in the way of academic learning.

# How to try this innovation in your community:

## What overarching questions need to be considered to implement this innovation?

- What skill lists already exist in your school community? Ex: socio-emotional, “non-cognitive”, “21st Century” skills, or graduation/workforce skills.
- What local resources/partners do you have in your community who already work with young people on these skills?
- Who are your most marginalized students and families and how could this approach focus on them?
- How similar can productivity skills be across classrooms, or across schools in your district, so that both families and students can deepen their familiarity and use of these skills from year to year?

## “A Day In the Life” with this Innovation:

In the table below, we lay out what a “day in the life” of the student interacting with the innovation might look like and what might be needed to make this work. This vision for the innovation is NOT meant to be the only way it could work. The key components are small groups of students and a point person who is always up to date regarding current expectations, supports and who to contact by topic. Local innovators will need to adapt these examples to make it fit their local context.

Student	Interaction with Support	What Would be Needed
<p>A 4th grader who is stuck on both the technology not working AND has a conceptual challenge with connecting fractions to decimals.</p>	<p>I’m stuck. The app where I’m supposed to submit my answers to the fractions homework isn’t working AND I don’t understand the question anyway. My mom prompted me to look at the productivity skills sheet next to my computer. I looked at the list and saw the first thing is “calming and centering”, so I took a deep breath like we had practiced.</p> <p>As I calmed down, I remembered that we had practiced finding and using the “Help” on any app, so I searched around and found that on the app I was using. I managed to login and start to submit my work.</p> <p>Ugh, I was still not understanding it though, so I looked at the productivity skills and saw that I should try to “communicate my challenge,” so I recorded a voice message about where I was struggling and sent that to my teacher.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A shared list of skills</li> <li>• Introduction of these skills to families; a video with explanation of the list</li> <li>• Explicit synchronous instruction for students and parents about the skills</li> <li>• Q &amp; A of problem solving techniques for students and families for each of the skills in the school’s list</li> <li>• Professional development for teachers in productivity skills. (mindset/productivity)</li> <li>• Training to help teachers identify what it might look like to practice productivity skills while doing typical kinds of independent or small group practice with academic content</li> </ul>
<p>A 7th grader who has not yet logged into virtual school.</p>	<p>My internet is weak and often doesn’t work or kicks me offline. I sometimes wonder whether it even matters if I sign in. School seems so uninteresting, and even if I try to get involved, the technology lets me down.</p> <p>My mom pulled out my list of productivity skills this morning and asked me if using one of these could help me figure out my problem on my own, or get help to make things work. One of the skills was to identify what I <b>can</b> still do when I hit a bump in my plans. While I waited for others to sort out the internet stuff. So today, I read three chapters of the novel I am reading for language arts.</p>	





## Strategy #5: Peer Support Teams



### Who is this strategy for?

**Learners who say things like:** "There are just some days when no matter how hard I try, I just am not motivated." OR "It really helps me to be able to work with other students. I like hearing their ideas. I like saying what I am thinking. It just keeps me going."

**Family members who say things like:** "When we were in remote learning, I really felt like both my son and daughter were lonely. They missed their friends. When we come back to in-person learning, I think they are going to need some help reconnecting."

### Description of this Partnership Strategy:

To help students stay engaged and **MAINTAIN EFFORT** when learning is challenging for whatever reason, create pairs or small groups of students who can support and mentor each other. Adults support and facilitate the groups where needed, creating a culture of friendship, care, and problem solving among the students. Students may also be able to contact one another outside of formally designated check in times.

This idea was designed to address a learner need, but if done with awareness of the needs of both families and educators, it can be something that helps address key problems for them as well. If implemented thoughtfully, this strategy can positively impact each group in these ways:

### Learners

- Learners have a network of support that they can depend on for help.
- Learners provide care and support for others.
- Learners feel connected to a community of learning.

### Families

- Families know help is available when they are not available or feel confident helping their children.
- Families know that their students are learning key skills around empathy and support.

### Educators

- Educators feel confident that students are learning skills such as self advocacy, peer modeling, coaching, listening, and speaking.
- The class community and climate/culture will be positively impacted. There will be a deeper connection between students.

# How to try this innovation in your community:

## What overarching questions need to be considered to implement this innovation?

- In your staff, what adults are available to help support student groups?
- Do you have potential partner organizations who might be interested in supporting groups? People like Rotary, Generation Citizen, Watch DOGS, college students, mentoring programs, Foster Grandparents, United Way etc.?
- Are there time structures during in-person learning that can be utilized to give small groups of students time together?
- Do you have a way to connect students to one another virtually, so they can engage with one another socially and related to school work?
- What frameworks or curricula for SEL (Social-Emotional Learning), community building or problem solving are already in place that might help teachers and students get this strategy off the ground?

## “A Day In the Life” with this Innovation:

In the table below, we lay out what a “day in the life” of the student interacting with the innovation might look like and what might be needed to make this work. This vision for the innovation is NOT meant to be the only way it could work. The key components are small groups of students and a point person who is always up to date regarding current expectations, supports and who to contact by topic. Local innovators will need to adapt these examples to make it fit their local context.

Student	Interaction with Support	What Would be Needed
<p>A 4th grader who is struggling to log in and complete assignments consistently</p> 	<p>I forget my password a lot. When Mr. Harris, a volunteer, asks me to share a problem with my peer coach, Caleb, I tell him about how I always forget my password. Caleb repeats what he hears my problem is, just like Mr. Harris demonstrated. After Caleb is sure he understands my issue, we talk about ways to solve my problem. We agree that I should write down my passwords and place them next to my computer. I'll check in with Caleb about that next week.</p> <p>After the call, I tried to go into the homework platform. I did have my password this time, but I couldn't figure out where to put my assignment. I called Caleb and he walked me through it.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• System for finding and training volunteers</li> <li>• Protocols and parameters for check in conversations between students and/or with mentors</li> <li>• A system of communication between volunteers, students and school staff</li> <li>• Open communication between volunteer and staff</li> <li>• Set times and parameters in place for communication or conferences</li> <li>• Ensure legal processes are followed for volunteer/student interactions: ie: background checks and supervision</li> </ul>
<p>A 7th grader who has not yet logged into virtual school or technology tools they are expected to use as part of in-person learning.</p>	<p>Whenever I have to do work online, I honestly avoid logging into my classes or signing in to the site I am supposed to be using. I just don't like working on a computer.</p> <p>Mr. Harris, a volunteer, called and put me in touch with Will, a kid I've been going to school with for a while. We started checking in once a week, and Mr. Harris has been helping us talk about what's been hard about life and school. It's been good to be able to talk with someone who isn't my dad. And Will has given me some ideas about how to make working on my computer a little less draining.</p>	



## Strategy #6: Teacher Office Hours



### Who is this strategy for?

**Learners who say things like:** "I am a little uncomfortable asking for help in front of other students." OR "I really struggle with writing back and forth with my teachers. Sometimes they don't really understand my question and then we write back and forth and back and forth. Talking is just so much easier."

**Family members who say things like:** "Sometime I just don't understand the work assigned to my 11th grader. It feels like the time it takes me to understand what the assignment is asking him to do, and then the time it takes for me to help him is just so inefficient. And then sometimes I don't get it right and he ends up having to redo everything after his teacher grades his work or gives him feedback. It would just be easier for him to get help straight from his teacher."

### Description of this Partnership Strategy:

To help students stay engaged and **MAINTAIN EFFORT** when learning at home is challenging for whatever reason, create a system for "teacher office hours" that extend beyond the school day so that families and students can get help when they need it. Implementing such a system may also involve staggering the work hours of some teachers so that some are starting and finishing later to provide additional office hours.

This idea was designed to address a learner need, but if done with awareness of the needs of both families and educators, it can be something that helps address key problems for them as well. If implemented thoughtfully, this strategy can positively impact each group in these ways:

### Learners

- The learner has someone to call right when they are stuck. The engagement keeps them going.
- The learner has help getting the technical and instructional help they need.
- The learner feels supported and accountable.

### Families

- Families feel less stress because they know ahead of time how their child can access help.
- Families know help is available when they are not available or feel confident helping.
- Adults who work during the school day may be able to connect with teachers better in the evening.

### Educators

- With enabling schedule changes, the pace and reaction time will be more manageable for educators.
- Families will be less frustrated to which makes educators more comfortable working with families as partners.
- Some teachers may be interested in an alternate work schedule.

# How to try this innovation in your community:

## What overarching questions need to be considered to implement this innovation?

- What flexibilities in teacher workday scheduling are available?
- Is there anything in your employment contract that would need to change to allow a teacher to opt into a schedule that trades some school day time for some after school time each week?
- What topics and issues should teachers be prepared to support?
- What training and capacity building will be needed to help teachers play this role effectively?

## “A Day In the Life” with this Innovation:

In the table below, we lay out what a “day in the life” of the student interacting with the innovation might look like and what might be needed to make this work. This vision for the innovation is NOT meant to be the only way it could work. The key components are small groups of students and a point person who is always up to date regarding current expectations, supports and who to contact by topic. Local innovators will need to adapt these examples to make it fit their local context.

Student	Interaction with Support	What Would be Needed
<p>4th grader who is struggling to log in and complete assignments consistently</p> 	<p>The program we use to upload our assignments is so annoying. When I'm doing my homework, it's usually after dinner, and it used to be that there was never anyone I could ask if I had a problem. But my mom told me that now there was a number I could call and talk to a teacher at my school, at least until 7:30 pm.</p> <p>So last night I was having trouble, and I called the teacher who had office hours and she answered and helped me login to upload my math homework.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Teacher schedules - possibly rotating teachers on day/night shifts</li><li>• Secure phone number/ computer access; Google Meets or Microsoft Teams platform per school district for parents/students to contact</li><li>• Shared knowledge of the platforms used by various teachers with instructions on content delivery</li><li>• Collaboration with day time teachers and evening teachers</li><li>• Pacing/instructional guides with notes to know where students are at from teacher to teacher</li><li>• PD for teachers and possibly support staff if needed</li><li>• Support from administration on allowing “other support staff” to assist in these ways and provide collaboration time during the day</li></ul>



## Strategy #7: Recording Instruction



### Who is this strategy for?

**Learners who say things like:** "Whether we are in the classroom or online, I sometimes get lost when teachers are presenting information. I really need to take notes, and if they talk too fast, it is hard for me to keep up."

**Family members who say things like:** "My daughter balances a lot. She is a strong student. She plays basketball, and she has a job at the veterinarian's office that she really loves. Sometimes her schedule literally pulls her away from instruction, but also her divided attention sometimes makes getting everything she needs from teacher lectures challenging."

### Description of this Partnership Strategy:

To give learners ways to build and express **LEARNER AGENCY** provide them with recordings of lessons and demonstrations. Then whether learning is happening in person or remotely, the learner can access the instruction when it works for them. They can also pause and take notes or listen to the lesson more than once.

This idea was designed to address a learner need, but if done with awareness of the needs of both families and educators, it can be something that helps address key problems for them as well. If implemented thoughtfully, this strategy can positively impact each group in these ways:

### Learners

- The learner is understood as a person with unique needs who and may learn at a different pace.
- The learner feels supported and accountable.
- The learner has the opportunity to revisit the lesson if they have questions.
- The learner can access the lesson from anywhere and at any time.
- Advanced learners may be able to move ahead without having to slow down and wait for the rest of the class.
- Learners will have an easier time keeping up with learning even when they need to be out of school for health or other reasons.

### Families

- Families will feel less stress because they know that if their schedule disrupts their child's learning they can watch the recorded lessons.
- Families know help is available when they are not available or don't feel confident helping the student with certain content.
- Families may feel more confident helping learners because they will have the video available to watch together.

### Educators

- Educators will not have to cover the same material multiple times so they can focus more time/energy on new material or helping those who need it.
- Educators may be able to use one recording for multiple classes (secondary levels).
- Tutors, paras, special ed teachers, etc. can access the lessons to help reinforce the concepts.
- Advanced students could move on to the next lesson or concept, enabling students to learn at their own pace and allowing educators more time to work with students individually or in small groups.

# How to try this innovation in your community:

## What overarching questions need to be considered to implement this innovation?

- What platforms/tools are available for recording and sharing videos in your district?
- What recording expectations and guidelines need to be established?
- How do we make the platform/system user friendly and easy to navigate for all involved?
  - How can resources/tools be combined in a user-friendly way and provided to families in a timely fashion, but without overloading them?
  - Where should past videos be stored and how should they be labeled?

## “A Day In the Life” with this Innovation:

In the table below, we lay out what a “day in the life” of the student interacting with the innovation might look like and what might be needed to make this work. This vision for the innovation is NOT meant to be the only way it could work. The key components are small groups of students and a point person who is always up to date regarding current expectations, supports and who to contact by topic. Local innovators will need to adapt these examples to make it fit their local context.

Student	Interaction with Support	What Would be Needed
<p>A 4th grader who is reading at the 2nd grade level but loves math and baseball.</p> 	<p>I was with my whole class in a video conference yesterday, and our teacher did a reading lesson. I don't like reading that much and had a hard time paying attention.</p> <p>Later that night, I was working on my homework, and I couldn't really remember what we had talked about. I went on the school's website and clicked on a link where all my teachers' lessons are stored. I found the reading lesson from earlier and I watched it with my dad. Then we looked at my homework and it made more sense.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A user friendly common platform for recording and sharing video</li> <li>• A system for storing videos that allows current lessons to be readily available and easy to find, but also allows continued access to previous lessons</li> <li>• A search engine that allows learners and families to search a specific educator's videos by subject, lesson title, or date</li> <li>• Instructions/technical guide for students and families to access the site/platform with FAQs and tech support line</li> </ul>
<p>High school student in an advanced math class who misses school due to sports</p>	<p>I have out of town tournaments and have to leave school early on Thursday or Friday several times a year. I'm in an advanced math class and my parents are no help at all. It is really helpful for me to be able to access the lessons over the weekend so I can get my work done and not fall behind.</p>	



## Strategy #8: Organize work by Learning Goal



### Who is this strategy for?

**Learners who say things like:** "Sometimes it feels like I have a very long list of things that don't connect. It makes it really hard to go from one thing to the next to the next. Each assignment feels like I am starting over and I am not sure what is the point."

**Family members who say things like:** "My son has been struggling to get organized, so have been sitting down with him each day to see what is assigned and and help him make a plan. I have been frustrated trying to help him because he has a lot of resources and assignments and I can't always figure out why one thing is assigned at the same time as another, which means we have a really hard time prioritizing what should come first and where he should spend the most time."

### Description of this Partnership Strategy:

To help learners grow as creative problem-solvers who can independently **MAINTAIN EFFORT**-- organize resources, assignments and assessments in groups labeled with the learning goal or competency for the work. Also let them know where to begin, what must be completed for assessment, and what choices they can make in between. Then whether learning is happening in person or remotely, the learner knows why they are engaging in each lesson and how to demonstrate learning.

This idea was designed to address a learner need, but if done with awareness of the needs of both families and educators, it can be something that helps address key problems for them as well. If implemented thoughtfully, this strategy can positively impact each group in these ways:

### Learners

- The learner has some choices which improves engagement.
- The learner knows the boundaries of their choices, what or how many of something must be done to provide evidence of learning.
- It is easier for the learner to make connections between what is modeled in lessons, what they practice and what they have to do on a assessment.
- When learners make these connections, they are more confident on assessments.
- Making these connections also leads to deeper understanding of the intended learning.

### Families

- Children have an easier time engaging in work when they know why it is important.
- Families know that each day their child will have some freedom to choose. These choices increase ownership and help prevent frustrations & homework battles.
- When parents cannot help their student immediately, they know they can suggest they try a different option related to the same learning goal.
- When options are limited, or material intensive, parents can feel frustrated or unable to meet the demands. Having different avenues for meeting goals alleviates frustration.

### Educators

- This may be more challenging to set up initially. But once it is set up, learners will be able to progress from lesson to practice and demonstration of learning more independently. This frees teachers to provide targeted support to individuals or small groups.
- This approach can make providing feedback easier and also makes it easier for students to use each piece of feedback they receive.

# How to try this innovation in your community:

## What overarching questions need to be considered to implement this innovation?

- o What are the learning goals that are of highest priority, and how can you communicate them to learners and families in a way that will make sense?
- o What resources do you already have to pull together lessons, practice opportunities and different ways for learners to demonstrate what they learned?
- o Are you prepared to grade in a way that looks for demonstration of the learning goal?
- o Are you prepared to provide clear feedback to learners and families about the ways in which a specific piece of work does or does not demonstrate the learning goal?
- o What is your best system for organizing materials by learning goal (google classroom, a commercial learning management system, etc.)?
- o Can you articulate to learners and families a pattern of how you hope they begin each new package of work?

## “A Day In the Life” with this Innovation:

In the table below, we lay out what a “day in the life” of the student interacting with the innovation might look like and what might be needed to make this work. This vision for the innovation is NOT meant to be the only way it could work. The key components are small groups of students and a point person who is always up to date regarding current expectations, supports and who to contact by topic. Local innovators will need to adapt these examples to make it fit their local context.

Student	Interaction with Support	What Would be Needed
<p>A 4th grader who is reading at the 2nd grade level but loves math and baseball.</p> 	<p>I am starting on a new learning goal in math today. It is funny but I am always a little nervous when we start a new topic. I really want to do a good job and figure it out quickly, but I also know I am going to have to read a bunch at the start, and I worry about keeping up.</p> <p>Today I watched a video recorded lesson from my teacher about how to convert fractions into decimals and at the end she asked me to do a little practice on my own. The practice was easy because they were easy fractions, like <math>\frac{1}{2}</math> and <math>\frac{1}{4}</math>, which reminded me of coins which are parts of a dollar.</p> <p>In our face to face time, we talked about what we practiced. I liked this because I knew what we were going to do and I was ready to share. Then our teacher explained how to make a few other more tricky fractions into decimals.</p> <p>Then she showed us on her screen the folder and a bingo card that laid out all of our options for practice. She said we needed to do at least half of the options. Some options are basically worksheets that she put in the folder, some options are online programs or apps for a phone that you can practice with. One of them was kind of a project where you make a bunch of paper rectangles that are all ten inches long and then measure with a ruler and cut them up a bunch of different ways. That project looked kind of fun, but I would rather just go to one of the worksheets and practice the tricks she showed us today.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Good system for organizing materials (labeled well) - one platform so that students and families know how to access it well</li><li>• Guidance from administration about what is expected in terms of grading and in terms of how many options everyone should be providing</li><li>• A range of instructional materials</li><li>• Not needed, but nice addition -- record lessons</li><li>• Not needed, but nice addition --peer learning group</li></ul>

## "A Day in the Life" continued...

Student	Interaction with Support	What Would be Needed
<p>7th grader who had a bad experience in the spring and has their doubts about the fall</p>	<p>I really hated the work my history teacher assigned during distance learning in the spring. It was basically all the same and not really my style. She asked us to read some part of our history book and answer the same kinds of questions, over and over and over. This might not make sense, but I really love learning about history, but almost always hate history class. I like to visit sites where important things happened. I like to take crayons and paper with me to old graveyards and make rubbings of really old graves. And I like reading stories about the past.</p> <p>I am not sure what I think about this yet, but this fall my teacher sent me a plan for learning that they think will work whether we get to return to school or not. She is going to put together small studies where we focus on the same thing for a little while, like maybe a group of key people in a particular time in US history, or maybe it is a few stories of everyday people who happened to be around when big things happened. Basically, we get a google folder from her that will have a few goals and questions, and then it will have some resources we can watch and read. There will be times when we have to login together to talk about what we are learning. And we will have to read/view at least half of the things he puts in the folder and track what we learn in our notes. We will take a few quizzes along the way, and then we will have two or three options for how we show her we really got it at the end.</p> <p>We will see how it goes, but at least there is going to be some variety, and we will get to stay focused on something long enough to get into the story.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Good system for organizing materials (labeled well) - one platform so that students and families know how to access it well</li><li>• Guidance from administration about what is expected in terms of grading and in terms of how many options everyone should be providing.</li><li>• A range of instructional materials</li><li>• Not needed, but nice addition -- record lessons</li><li>• Not needed, but nice addition --peer learning group</li></ul>

# Additional Resources

*Resources identified by the core team at DPI that communities may find useful as they seek to build stronger family and school partnerships*



## **Resources Specific to Each Strategy:**

### **Strategy #1-Point Person**

- <https://www.ptotoday.com/pto-today-articles/article/9072-how-to-work-with-school-staff>
- <https://www.readingrockets.org/article/building-parent-teacher-relationships>

### **Strategy #2 Learning Compacts**

- <https://www.edutopia.org/video/social-contracts-foster-community-classroom>
- <https://uwaterloo.ca/centre-for-teaching-excellence/teaching-resources/teaching-tips/tips-students/self-directed-learning/self-directed-learning-learning-contracts>
- <https://uwaterloo.ca/centre-for-teaching-excellence/teaching-resources/teaching-tips/developing-assignments/group-work/making-group-contracts>
- [https://www.fortthomas.kyschools.us/userfiles/92/Student\\_Services/Woodfill\\_Title\\_I\\_Contract.pdf](https://www.fortthomas.kyschools.us/userfiles/92/Student_Services/Woodfill_Title_I_Contract.pdf)
- [https://tb2cdn.schoolwebmasters.com/acnt\\_42975/site\\_42976/Documents/Harrison\\_PLDifferntiationWithLearningContracts.pdf](https://tb2cdn.schoolwebmasters.com/acnt_42975/site_42976/Documents/Harrison_PLDifferntiationWithLearningContracts.pdf)
- <https://aurora-institute.org/blog/getting-started-with-personalized-learning-resources-for-education-leaders-teachers-and-policy-makers/>

### **Strategy #3 Prioritizing Standards**

- <https://www.nd.gov/dpi/districtschools/k-12-education-content-standards>
- <https://ndrea.org/index.php?id=112>
- <https://ndrea.org/index.php?id=111>
- <https://www.nd.gov/dpi/districtschools/harvesting-innovation>
- <https://www.gettingsmart.com/2014/11/10-ways-personalize-learning/>
- <https://www.compcenternetwork.org/resources>

### **Strategy #4 Productivity Skills**

- <https://www.common sense.org/education/articles/we-all-teach-sel-perseverance-activities-and-tools-for-students>
- <https://childmind.org/topics/concerns/organizational-skills/>

# Resources Continued...

## **Strategy #5 Peer Support Teams**

<https://inclusiveschools.org/category/resources/peer-supports/>

<https://www.brighthubeducation.com/classroom-management/121401-seven-easy-steps-for-creating-a-classroom-accountability-system/#:~:text=likelihood%20of%20winning.-,4.,when%20reviewing%20each%20other>

## **Strategy # 6 Teacher Office Hours**

<https://wideopenschool.org/families-and-teachers/for-teachers/>

<https://www.simplykinder.com/teacher-tips-for-work-life-balance/>

<https://resilienteducator.com/classroom-resources/five-tips-for-teacher-work-life-balance/>

## **Strategy #7 Recording Instruction**

<https://teaching.uncc.edu/teaching-guides/blended-hybrid-learning>

<https://www.youtube.com/user/ericcurts/videos>

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_Cw9uXfgTLQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_Cw9uXfgTLQ)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LiEGspEwZ-E>

## **Strategy #8 Organizing by learning goal**

<https://www.oercommons.org/hubs/North-Dakota>

## **General Family Engagement Resources:**

- <https://www.nd.gov/dpi/parentscommunity/parents/family-engagement/family-cabinet-resource-kit>
- <https://www.ksdetasn.org/search/resources>
- [https://cdn.ymaws.com/nafsce.org/resource/resmgr/Toolkits/Boston\\_Engaging\\_Families\\_Out.pdf](https://cdn.ymaws.com/nafsce.org/resource/resmgr/Toolkits/Boston_Engaging_Families_Out.pdf)
- <https://www.ndpanda.org/state-resources>
- <http://www.pto.org/topics.html>
- <https://www.pta.org/home/run-your-pta/National-Standards-for-Family-School-Partnerships>
- [https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/pacific/pdf/REL\\_2016148.pdf](https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/pacific/pdf/REL_2016148.pdf)
- <https://www.understood.org/>
- <https://csti.wested.org/library/>
- [https://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,4615,7-140-81376\\_51051-262889--,00.html](https://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,4615,7-140-81376_51051-262889--,00.html)
- Shifting from Family Involvement to Family Engagement in K12 Schools, <https://www.schoolmint.com/shifting-from-family-involvement-to-family-engagement-in-k12-schools/>
- Kansas Family Engagement and partnership Standards for Early Childhood: This has a wide range of resources on topics such as, parents as advocates, family engagement with special education and title services, bridging racial, class and cultural differences. Begin here and navigate to specific topics.  
<https://www.ksde.org/Portals/0/Early%20Childhood/Kindergarten/Kansas%20Family%20Engagement%20and%20Partnership%20Standards%20for%20Early%20Childhood.pdf>

# Resources Continued...

- 10 Ideas for Engaging Parents, <http://www.nea.org/tools/56945.htm>
- 12 Ways Digital Tools Power Parent Engagement, <https://www.pearsoned.com/digital-tools-power-parent-engagement/#:~:text=Here's%20a%20few%20tips%3A,to%20provide%20feedback%20to%20students.>
- A Parent's Role in Virtual Education, <https://achievevirtual.org/a-parents-role-in-virtual-education/>
- 3 Strategies to Involve Parents in Children's Education & Positive Study Environments, <https://teach.com/blog/3-strategies-to-involve-parents-in-children-education/>
- Top tips for teachers on engaging parents in learning, <https://www.theguardian.com/teacher-network/2015/jun/28/top-tips-for-teachers-on-engaging-parents-in-learning>
- Parents' Deep Engagement In Remote Learning During COVID-19 Will Redefine Relationships Between Families And Schools, <https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/parents-deep-engagement-in-remote-learning-during-covid-19-will-redefine-relationships-between-families-and-schools-301062310.html>
- Free Printable for PTO's and PTA's , <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/97953360630443601/>
- The Ultimate List of Parent Workshop Ideas! <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/42643527709922571/>
- 50 Meaningful Family Acts of Kindness, <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/803681495989679614/>
- 25 Things to do at night to create a good morning, <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/275845545907295531/>
- Happy Family Checklist, <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/238620480232361739/>