



Sullivan County BOCES

DISTANCE LEARNING NETWORK



2007 – 2008

“Helping to prepare students of all ages for the new millennium.”

Teacher Responsibilities

The responsibilities of the teacher participating in a Distance Learning Network Program are essentially the same as those of any teacher assigned to classes in the Sullivan County public schools. With this understanding, the following list provides a summary of general responsibilities some that may be unique to the Distance Learning Network Programs.

A teacher in the Distance Learning Network Program is expected to:

1. Plan lessons, homework and tests.
2. Learn to make full use of the Distance Learning equipment.
3. Perform necessary record keeping.
4. Provide extra help for students as needed.
5. Send grades to remote sites when scheduled.
6. Communicate with parents as needed.
7. Maintain a positive teaching and learning environment.
8. Be responsible for discipline and reporting to student's home district administration. Persistent or serious problems will be the responsibility of the student's home administrators or their designee.
9. Develop course outlines, instructional objectives and grading procedures to be shared with students and district administrators at the beginning of each semester or academic year.
10. Develop three "emergency" lessons for use by substitutes. At least one of these plans should NOT include the use of Distance Learning equipment.
11. If appropriate, videotape classes for use by students who are absent or wish to review classes.
12. Submit complete textbook, videotape and supply orders to the Sullivan County BOCES Distance Learning Director when scheduled.

Teacher Supervision and Evaluation

Host site administrators and supervisors will continue to provide general supervision for teachers participating in the Distance Learning Network Programs. The Sullivan County Distance Learning Director will share responsibilities with the site administrators for the Distance Learning Network Program staff and activities.

The evaluation of teachers involved in the Distance Learning Network Programs will be done by the site administrator in consultation with the Sullivan County Distance Learning Director for teaching responsibilities relating to the Distance Learning Network Programs.

Teachers hired by Sullivan County BOCES and assigned to a school district host site will work under shared supervision and evaluation procedures of the host site and Sullivan County BOCES.

Staff Development Procedures

Mandatory training for teachers and facilitators in the use of the Distance Learning Network equipment and teaching techniques will be scheduled during the summer and/or at convenient times during the academic year.

Support staff, such as additional facilitators, substitute teachers, etc. at the local districts are eligible to attend training sessions.

Districts will be billed for the cost of training. These costs will be eligible for Sullivan County BOCES aid.

Staff Development Activities

The teachers and support staff participating in the Distance Learning Network Programs will complete an introductory training program prior to working on the Distance Learning Network. Teachers and staff not participating in the Distance Learning Network Programs may also take the training at the discretion of the district. The training will consist of:

1. An overview of the program, an explanation of the equipment and a discussion of the experience of teaching and facilitating on the Network.
2. A description and demonstration of the use of the equipment.
3. An opportunity for the participants to use the equipment.

4. Suggestions and demonstrations of effective teaching techniques that may be incorporated into the Distance Learning Network Programs.
5. Individual microteaching experiences by the participants.

Student Selection and Scheduling

Students will be enrolled in the Distance Learning Network Programs in the following manner.

1. The guidance department at each site will enroll students in any of the Distance Learning Network Programs offered as part of the regular school program. The host school will determine course prerequisites. Once enrolled, each student and his/her parent or guardian will sign a *Student Agreement Form*.
2. Ideally, the aggregate maximum enrollment for each course shall not exceed 25, except that the host site may add as many as two (2) more students, bringing the total to 27, if it deems necessary. Exceptions to this guideline may occur at the discretion of the superintendents of the schools involved in the course in question.
3. The home districts will forward to the Sullivan County BOCES Distance Learning Director class enrollment lists for each course. The Director will generate a class list for each course and give the information to the Distance Learning Network Program teachers.
4. Sullivan County BOCES will maintain all course enrollments by student and home district.
5. Sullivan County BOCES of participating districts may sponsor enrichment or special offerings that are in addition to the regular curriculum. Students may enroll in these courses with the approval of their home districts and/or the instructor where appropriate.

Student Agreement

The successes of the Distance Learning Network Programs require the cooperation and support of participating students. The following expectations must be understood and agreed upon by EACH student.

1. Follow all school rules, including those specifically developed for the Distance Learning Network Programs.
2. Do not handle classroom equipment unless authorized.
3. Sit within camera view at all times unless otherwise instructed by the teacher and/or facilitator.

In cases where students do not follow policy they will be subject to local procedures administered by the teacher, site administrator(s) and/or others as designated.

Students and their parents or guardians must sign a ***Student Agreement Form*** containing the information outlined above and parents and/or guardians must be informed of the Distance Learning Network Program policies on attendance and grading as well as release of information or photographs.

Student Record Keeping

Student records for courses taught over the Distance Learning Network will be developed and maintained by the host teacher. This file will include grades, attendance and any other information deemed necessary, such as test scores, samples of student work, major projects etc. This file will be forwarded to the student's home district at the conclusion of the course.

Course Selection and Scheduling

Courses taught over the Distance Learning Network will be selected and scheduled by the Program Planning Committee, which shall consist of the high school principal of each participating school district or his/her designee. Assistant principals and/or guidance chairs may also serve on the committee, which shall be chaired by the Sullivan County BOCES Distance Learning Director. The schedule will be developed and updated by the Director as needed and distributed to all participating districts, including guidance personnel, on a timely basis. A final schedule will be distributed in September.

In order to minimize disruption of instruction, the Distance Learning Network Program classes take precedence in the schedule of hosting teachers, at the discretion of the high school principal.

Class Cancellations and Interruptions

Classes will be canceled on four (4) factors at the host site, such as equipment failure, teacher absence, emergency closing days or early dismissal.

Cancellations at remote sites will be treated as classes missed and the students will be responsible for making up the work.

The Distance Learning Network Programs' schedule will remain the same when schools experience delayed openings. A course scheduled to start prior to a remote school's delayed opening will be held if the host school is open.

The Sullivan County BOCES Distance Learning Technician will be notified if a disruption or cancellation is due to equipment failure.

Interruptions such as fire drills and announcements will be held to a minimum and, if possible, remote sites will be notified in advance.

In the event of a 2-hour delay, the Distance Learning Network Programs will follow the schedule of the school that is *hosting* the current class.

Course Descriptions

A course description for each of the Distance Learning Network Programs will be shared with the principals and guidance personnel in all participating districts. The host school will develop the course description and submit it to the Sullivan County BOCES Distance Learning Director, who will forward it to the appropriate school district personnel.

Textbooks and Materials

SELECTION: The text(s) and materials for a course will be chosen by the host teacher in consultation with his/her department chair or supervisor, and approved by the Sullivan County BOCES Distance Learning Director.

ORDERING: All texts, supplies and other materials must be ordered through Sullivan County BOCES utilizing a *New York State Contract vendor*. Teachers should provide all the information necessary to enable the Sullivan County Director to place the order efficiently. This includes the name of the item, the quantity (if known), the publisher or distributor, the ISBN and/or catalog number and the price. Text and materials costs will be aggregated and averaged among participating districts and each district will be billed by Sullivan County BOCES.

DISTRIBUTION: The Sullivan County BOCES Distance Learning Director will be responsible for storage and distribution of books and materials. Non-consumable books and materials will be accounted for by the Sullivan County BOCES Distance Learning Director and either stored in Distance Learning Network classrooms or returned to Sullivan County BOCES.

INVENTORY: The Sullivan County BOCES Distance Learning Director will be responsible for the development and maintenance of an inventory of books and materials. S/he will also be responsible for the storage of the Distance Learning Network books and materials not in use.

COPYRIGHT: If a teacher's order for books and materials includes any videotapes, the teacher should complete the form in this handbook that seeks the appropriate authorization for their transmission over the Distance Learning Network. The Sullivan County BOCES Distance Learning Director will then submit the form with the order.

Substitute Teachers

A teacher who will be absent from his/her class will follow established procedures related to substitute coverage. In addition, the teacher will inform the appropriate school personnel that s/he is the host of a Distance Learning Network Program class.

S/he will develop three (3) "emergency" lesson plans for use by substitutes or facilitators.

Other trained host teachers may substitute for the absent teacher when possible.

Every effort will be made to train additional staff as substitutes when training sessions are conducted. These may include teacher aides, teaching assistants and substitute teachers.

Evaluation of Students

Student evaluation will be done in accordance with the approved Course Description. Students will be informed of expectations, evaluation methods and grading policies and processes at the beginning of the semester.

The final exam for a course will be coordinated with all sites. The teacher will inform the Sullivan County BOCES Distance Learning Director of the exam schedule.

If a course has an “Honors Strand,” the option to pursue honors credit will be afforded to all students in the course.

Grading

Grades will be awarded in the manner prescribed by the host site. If necessary, remote sites will translate grades for local records. Teachers will ensure that grade reports are transmitted to the student’s home district by courier, fax or document camera by the dates required by the home districts.

When a student’s home district uses interim reports, the teacher will submit such reports to the school in a timely fashion. The home district will provide the teacher with the comment codes, comment sheets and schedule of due dates. Where bubble sheets are used, the teacher will transmit the information to the home district, where the data will be input for the creation of report cards. Teachers and facilitators may work together on the Distance Learning Network, utilizing the fax and Elmo (document camera) to complete necessary paperwork.

While the host teacher grades students, the student’s home district, according to its grading policy, grants credit. Passing grades in Sullivan County School Districts:

Eldred: 65
Fallsburg: 65
Liberty: 65

Roscoe: 65
SC BOCES [RPEC]: 65

Student Discipline

Teachers conducting Distance Learning Network Program classes are expected to maintain an appropriate learning environment.

The site administrators or designee according to the discipline policy of the site where the student is enrolled will handle inappropriate student behavior at remote sites.

Field Trips and Class Meetings

Student field trips and class meetings by the Distance Learning Network Program teachers are encouraged. Host teachers are also encouraged to teach from one of their remote sites from time to time, with the support of the administration at the teacher's home district.

Such activities will be arranged by agreement of the host and remote sites through their respective building principals or his/her designee. The Sullivan County BOCES Director will facilitate this process if necessary.

Courier

The Sullivan County BOCES Distance Learning Network Program will provide a courier service to transport items that cannot be transported electronically, such as books, videotapes, homework, equipment or supplies.

The Sullivan County BOCES Distance Learning Director will coordinate the courier service.

System Utilization

Teachers are encouraged to use the Distance Learning Network at times other than during their regularly scheduled class periods to meet with students, facilitators, colleagues or parents. The office of the Sullivan County BOCES Distance Learning Director schedules all such events to avoid conflicts with others wishing to use the Distance Learning Network at the same time and at the same sites and to ensure that someone trained on the equipment is at each site to be used. Teachers wishing to use the Distance Learning Network at times other than their regularly scheduled classes should complete the ***Room Use Form***.

Classroom Visitors

Because the Distance Learning Network Programs are an exciting educational innovation, the Sullivan County BOCES and the high schools involved will strive to showcase its use to the community and visitors from beyond the county. Visitors should be encouraged to remain quietly out of camera range and not to disrupt instruction. But as a matter of courtesy to all involved, the teacher and/or facilitator in a classroom where visitors arrive should introduce the guests to the other classrooms online at that time.

Glossary

Aggregate: The aggregate is the total for the combined participating school districts. Textbooks used for the Distance Learning Network Programs, for instance, are billed for by combining the total (aggregate) expense for all programs per year and then averaging it by the number of school districts participating that year.

Asynchronous Communication: Virtual learning occurs either in the form of asynchronous (not at the same time) or synchronous (immediate and face-to-face) communication between teachers and students or student to student. In the case of videoconferencing, communication occurs in a synchronous fashion. In the case of online or Internet-based instruction, interaction occurs in a manner that is asynchronous – not simultaneous and not occurring in real time. Examples of asynchronous communication include e-mail, e-mail lists, and bulletin boards.

Bandwidth: Bandwidth refers to the capacity of your communications network to exchange data between two nodes on the network. Bandwidth capacity determines the amount of data – whether it is video, audio, or text – that can be transmitted through network channels in a given amount of time.

Bridge: If you're conducting a videoconference with more than two sites participating, the bridge, also called the MCU (multipoint control unit), connects the sites so that they can all communicate at the same time.

Content Provider: A formal or informal agency that provides educational content to K-12 schools through interactive videoconferencing.

Course Description Form: The course description form describes each program offered or proposed for the Distance Learning Network, is shared by the appropriate administrative and guidance personnel at each member district.

Elmo: Elmo is a document camera.

End Users: In a network situation, each participating site and its participants are end users. They are, in essence, the “customers” of the network, using the hardware and software services offered by the network.

Equipment: Equipment refers to the special audio and video equipment – including television monitors, microphones, cameras, etc. – used by the Distance Learning Network Programs.

External Devices: Also referred to as “system peripherals,” these are pieces of equipment – such as VCRs, electronic whiteboards, and document cameras – that add features to the interactive videoconference.

Facilitator: The on-site individual who assists students during a videoconference and helps them learn from a virtual teacher in either a synchronous or asynchronous situation.

H.323: A video compression/communication standard, H.323 is an algorithm that ensures the interoperability of IVC units, no matter the brand name, manufacturer, or vendor. This standard was developed by a consortium of networking experts via an International Telecommunication Union study group.

Host Site: The host site is the classroom from which a class is originating; in other words, where the teacher is physically present.

Interactive Videoconferencing (IVC): Two-way video and audio communication supported by a computer network or digital phone line that facilitates interaction between people in two (point-to-point) or more (multipoint) locations, creating a virtual classroom or conference room.

IP Address: An address on a network that identifies a particular computer or communication device. Each IP address is unique and generally has four decimal numbers. For an IP-based (Internet) videoconference, this address works like a Web site URL, dialing your system into the conference. For a point-to-point IVC, you can dial the other site's IP number directly, much like a phone call, avoiding use of your network's bridging services.

ISDN: ISDN stands for Integrated Services Digital Network, a digital phone line that allows the integrated transmission of voice, video, and data, facilitating global interaction via a set of protocol and interface standards.

Mbps (Megabits Per Second): A data transmission rate measured in bits per second (bps), applied in multiplier prefixes of kilo (K, or 1,000), mega (M, 1,000,000), or giga (G, 1,000,000,000). Therefore, 56Kbps represents 56,000 bits per second.

Peripheral: An external device such as a VCR, electronic whiteboard, or document camera that adds features and provides input to an IVC system.

Program Planning Committee: The Sullivan County BOCES Distance Learning Director chairs the Distance Learning Network Program Planning Committee. Representatives to this committee from each participating school district make the decisions about course offerings over the Distance Learning Network.

Remote Site: The remote site(s) is the classroom(s) electronically connected to the host site. This classroom is physically located elsewhere.

Standard Data Rate: Videoconference networks set a standard rate of delivery. This can range from 128bps to 384bps or greater. A minimum standard of quality in videoconferencing systems today is 384bps. For an optimal IVC, each system must be set at the same standard rate.

Streaming (Video Stream): Delivery of a compressed video file over an IP connection, such as the Internet or Intranet is called streaming. The streaming process allows end users to view the file without first downloading it onto their own computer. The video is stored only temporarily on the viewer's computer (although users can also save the file onto their hard drive if they wish.)

Student Agreement Form: This form, signed by the each student and his or her parent and/or guardian, assures that the student understands and has agreed to abide by the guidelines of the Distance Learning Network Programs.