

Continuity of Education Plan

School District	YouthBuild Philadelphia Charter School
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Goal of Plan

To provide continuity of quality education during this time of crisis through a mixture of planned instruction and enrichment and review activities through a blend of synchronous and asynchronous online classwork.

Overview of Plan

At YouthBuild, half of our students are assigned to the academic session while the other students are vocation work sites. During the time of the physical building closure, the academic classes are holding weekly live classes, weekly discussion boards, and independent assignments. All workforce readiness classes are also holding daily live classes, weekly discussion boards, and independent assignments. All live classes and corresponding assignments are provided on a weekly basis so that students can create a schedule that will work best as they manage home life and remote learning. Specialized services staff are assigned to all live classes as an additional support for students. A broad range of student engagement, support, and mentoring work continues during closure to connect with learners in as many ways and spaces as possible.

Expectations for Teaching and Learning

It is our expectation that teaching and learning at YouthBuild Philadelphia will continue to be engaging, personalized and meaningful during this period of distance learning. Teaching and learning will include a blend of enrichment and review activities along with new material through engaging and flexible planned instruction. YouthBuild Philadelphia expects that curriculum and coursework will be modified so that it is accessible through various distance learning methods. We expect that all students will make a good faith effort to engage in class materials and projects and reach out to staff members for support. We expect that staff will make reasonable accommodations and provide intensive supports as needed.

Communication Tools and Strategies

YouthBuild staff has been in regular communication with all currently active students. Communication has been messaged via regular emails, social media, and through phone conversations with mentors,

teachers, and success managers. Live classes have been hosted through a variety of platforms including Zoom, Instagram Live, and Google Hangouts. Packets have been mailed to students who indicated that they do not have Wi-Fi access as we work to remedy that obstacle, or they can pick up their packets for the week from the school lobby on Wednesday mornings.

Access (Devices, Platforms, Handouts)

In order to fully participate in the distance learning plan created by YouthBuild, students will need a safe space conducive to completing work from home, printed learning materials and/or a device that has access to the internet. Instructors at YouthBuild are creating live class sessions, which are also recorded for students to access on their own time, through Google Classroom/Hangouts, Zoom technology, and social media.

All YouthBuild students can borrow a Chromebook from the school with distribution scheduled to begin the week of April 6th. Since the school closure, YouthBuild has opened its doors to students every Wednesday to pick up printed learning materials, meals and other food resources, and transpasses. YouthBuild intends to continue in-person resource distribution to students which would include printed learning materials, food, transpasses, and Chromebooks for students that have not already received one. To date, this distribution has been weekly; however, schedule for physical building openings might be reduced based on health and safety priorities for students and staff.

Staff General Expectations

All staff are expected to work a full schedule remotely, check in regularly with their supervisor, attend virtual staff meetings, and provide dedicated time for students to check in with questions and to provide personalized supports with students, mentees, and alumni mentees.

All instructors at YouthBuild met the first day of closure to develop the overall plan, format for hosting live classes, and estimated workload for students on a weekly basis. Instructors have met weekly to touch base about student engagement and to make modifications to plans as they have continued to experiment with remote learning. Additionally, there is a comprehensive group of staff, including many from the instructional team and senior leadership team members, who are meeting weekly to brainstorm long term strategy in the event that school will remain closed for the remainder of the year.

Student Expectations

Students are expected to engage with all distance learning activities as they are able, communicate regularly with staff about barriers and challenges they may have and supports that they need, and continue to work toward completing graduation requirements. We are in the process of developing a waiver/modification process for students who are unable to complete certain requirements due to direct and indirect challenges faced by remote learning programming.

Attendance / Accountability

YouthBuild Philadelphia is continuing to track daily attendance through engagement (which includes access online classes, turning in work, connecting with staff members through phone calls, emails or texts, and in person meet ups on Wednesday to collect food or school packets.) Students are expected to do classwork, with reasonable accommodations being made for individual circumstances.

Good Faith Efforts for Access and Equity for All Students

The issue of access has come up consistently in conversations about the continuity of our learning. Student Success Managers are working with all students to ensure that gaps in access can be addressed through the City's internet resources. Chromebooks have been ordered for all students. Instructors and special education team members are holding open office hours for students to use if they are having difficulty accessing materials, either printed or online. Additionally, the leadership team and the board are working to consider what the end of year graduation requirements will look like for students since YouthBuild is a one year program. We recognize that this conversation needs to consider the issue of access/equity as some of our students are not in home environments that are conducive to working independently on academic work. Some direct changes that we are exploring include rethinking the students' simultaneous class load to ensure that students are able to manage multiple online courses at one time (ie: instead of four classes, students would take two with a deeper focus on those courses over a shorter period of time). All students will be provided opportunities to complete their core competencies either remotely, using printed learning materials, or in an extended summer session if they are unable to complete from distance during the school closure based on schedule modifications and/or access issues during closure.

YouthBuild Philadelphia continues to have Student Success Managers working with each of our students to connect them to any resources or needs they might have during this time. We are having weekly check-ins with students and referring them to community partners/resources that can provide assistance with Food, medical, essential items, and housing. Our partners Covenant House and Valley Youth House continue to assist our students with emergency housing. We also are still able to assist students through our Needs Based Grant for emergency situations. These grants cover costs for anything that students need urgently, including but not limited to rent, medical, transportation, food, phone, and other pressing issues impacted by lack of financial assets.

YouthBuild Philadelphia students, as young adults, present with many varied special circumstances. Over the past two weeks, we have identified the most pressing concerns pressing our students and developed comprehensive and proactive plans to meet all of those needs. We are working diligently on a variety of creative ways to allow due considerations for those needs and/or limitations without students experiencing any penalties for them. Our focus in these challenging times continues to be on the success of all of our students.

Special Education Supports

Special Education staff are reaching out to students with IEPs by whatever medium is most convenient or preferred by the student (telephone, text, social media, Instagram, etc.) to provide individualized support to those students. For example, in some cases, staff are acting as scribes for students for whom it is difficult to produce written work. Counselors are similarly reaching out to students with counseling as a related service in their IEPs. Also, a speech pathologist is providing

online language-development services to a student who requires it. Special education staff are joining live classes to serve as an additional resource and support for students.

EL Supports

During the remote instruction necessitated by COVID-19, YouthBuild will continue to provide appropriate accommodations and instruction for English learners (ELs). The EL teacher/coordinator will communicate frequently with ELs and families to identify needs for any type of assistance, including but not limited to: accessing instruction, food, or assistance with medical or social services. The EL teacher/coordinator will collaborate with other school staff and partners to connect students and families with resources to meet those needs. The EL teacher/coordinator will also continue to work closely with teachers to ensure that content instruction is accessible to EL students, necessary accommodations are provided for assignments, and expectations and instructions for ELs are clear and provided in the students' preferred methods of communication.

A blend of synchronous and asynchronous online classwork will allow students varied opportunities for interaction and engagement through oral language. Texts and written assignments will continue to be specially designed and scaffolded to support content and language acquisition. ELs will continue to receive daily individualized support and instruction delivered by the EL teacher/coordinator (a certified ESL specialist), with English Language Development (ELD) embedded in content classes and provided through dedicated 1:1 and small group instruction. Special consideration will continue to be given to the need for translation and interpretation during remote instruction. As needed, students will continue to be provided with translated information and content materials and encouraged to use the resources of their home languages to support English language learning. The EL teacher/coordinator should be consulted immediately if staff members have concerns regarding academic progress of any EL.

Gifted Education

N/A

Building/Grade Level Contacts

N/A

Resource Links

Director of Curriculum and Instruction – Sarah Burgess, sburgess@youthbuildphilly.org
Director of Workforce Development – Melissa Jackson, mjackson@youthbuildphilly.org
Director of Skill Development – Danyelle Austin, daustin@youthbuildphilly.org