



Remote Learning Academy Program 2021-2022

Vision

The Rush-Henrietta Central School District is committed to providing the best possible learning environment for all students. During the pandemic, the district relied on its experience with online learning and discovered it was more prepared than many of its counterparts when it came to addressing the challenges presented by remote learning. In the process, it became apparent remote learning works especially well for some students.

It is our responsibility to provide learning models that give students - and their families - choice. Students need to learn in a way that emulates the world in which they live, the same world our district is preparing them to enter. We are focused on how we can engage kids in the most meaningful ways, giving them new opportunities designed for modern learning.

For these reasons, Rush-Henrietta continues to offer a remote learning option for students during 2021-2022. This year's Remote Learning Academy (RLA) uses essential elements of the successful first-year effort, but is revised to make the program stronger. This redesign reflects a program review conducted in Spring 2021 by the director of professional learning and program evaluation (Appendix A).

Conceptual Design

Remote learning is offered to all students in grades K-12. Students from each grade-level band (K-3, 4-6, 7-9, 10-12) are enrolled at one school. Likewise, teachers are assigned to one school at each grade-level band. This allows students and teachers to be connected to a school culture and follow the processes and procedures of a single school. Teachers work collaboratively with grade-level (or course) colleagues and have access to remote counterparts at their grade levels.

The principal of each school hosting the RLA program is responsible for implementation. This oversight includes student management, academic progress of students, and supervision of teachers. The Director of Technology is responsible for K-12 RLA program management and improvement, as well as professional learning for staff and families. By providing the RLA program at one school at each grade-level band, the following is consistently provided:

- Fully staffed, on-site student service providers to work with RLA students
- Fully staffed, on-site support team to work with RLA teachers
- Fully staffed, on-site clerical and attendance staff for RLA program
- On-site access to grade-level/course instructional coaches and library media specialists
- School-wide events (i.e. assemblies, PBIS, book fairs, PTO events) for staff/students
- Efficient material ordering and distribution process by school staff
- Reallocation of remote learning funding to Remote Learning Academy school building

Remote Learning Academy Schools

Grade-level Band	School	Principal
Primary (K-1)	Winslow Elementary School	Jeff Pollard
Primary (2-3)	Crane Elementary School	Brian Hill
Intermediate (4-6)	Vollmer Elementary School	Jennifer Tomalty
Junior High (7-9)	Roth Junior High School	Kerry Macko
Senior High (10-12)	Senior High School	Tim Shafer

Student Enrollment

Process

Rush-Henrietta communicates information about the Remote Learning Academy throughout the school year. This is done primarily via E-News and the district website. Initial communication includes an explanation of the RLA option and a requirement that parents complete a form to enroll their child for in-person or remote learning by a given date. The district also communicates information regarding program changes, as well as student performance indicators reflective of successful participation in a remote-learning environment. All requests to enroll in remote learning are completed through an online enrollment process.

Principals review student enrollment. They engage in conversations with parents and guardians of students who may not be well-suited for remote learning based on experience. Together they decide which learning environment is best for the student. If the New York State Education Department mandates remote learning as a choice for all students, regardless of local school district parameters, parents may opt for remote learning regardless of district criteria. Identified health concerns are considered as a reason to pursue remote learning.

As part of the communication announcing two learning models, special education parents were informed that state law requires families of all special education students enrolling in the Remote Learning Academy to have a new CSE meeting with the district before the school year begins to review their child's Individualized Education Program.

Commitment

Once a parent or guardian submits an enrollment form and the deadline for submission has expired, students remain in the selected program for the entire school year. Once a commitment to the in-person model has been made, a student can only switch to the RLA with a medical note or superintendent's approval due to extraordinary circumstances. If a student is struggling in a particular learning model, proper support and interventions are provided to assist the student to be successful. If a student continues to lag behind in the RLA program, the principal recommends to the superintendent that the student be moved to the in-person learning model at his or her home school.

Characteristics that Predict Success

After reviewing academic results, anecdotal reports from teachers and administrators, and direct observations of last year's RLA students - as well as those participating in online courses during the past four years - there are clear indicators that predict success with remote learning.

Elementary students (K-6) are more likely to succeed in the RLA if they:

- advocate for themselves when struggling with assigned work or class content.
- participate in class appropriately by using camera, chat, and raise-hand features.
- have a place in the home that is conducive to learning and keep track of materials.
- are able to do work outside of synchronous instruction (may need self-motivation).

Secondary students (7-12) are more likely to succeed in the RLA if they:

- work well independently and enjoy learning new material on their own.
- can plan, prioritize, organize, and initiate tasks, and advocate for themselves.
- participate in class appropriately by using camera, chat, and raise-hand features.
- complete all assignments and assessments diligently, whether in class or on their own.
- can troubleshoot technology issues and have a place in the house conducive to learning.
- attend classes on time without prompting.

Successful RLA families:

- provide supervision for the student at home and ensure regular class attendance.
- support completion of asynchronous work and following of instructions and directions.
- help troubleshoot technology issues and guarantee a reliable internet connection.
- provide a dedicated space in the home that is conducive to learning.
- communicate regularly with teachers to support learning.

Safe and Caring Learning Environments

Establishing a climate of safety, comfort, and routine is a priority for students attending school online. Teachers, social workers, and counselors provide social-emotional and mental health support for students using restorative practices and by building community, trust, and respect. Teachers and counselors work with students to establish and maintain online norms, routines, and schedules. Students work with counselors at the RLA school regarding courses and schedules, and to provide social-emotional support as needed. Social workers at the RLA school also are available to assist students and families.

Student Schedule and Attendance

Remote students follow the same start and end times as the in-person students. They have a set schedule and meet with teachers five days a week to engage in lessons. In grades K-6, teachers meet with different groups within the instructional day based on student groupings and interventions. Daily attendance is required by New York state and is recorded to help ensure that students are engaged in learning each day. This is based on being in attendance for synchronous instructional time, which is communicated in advance by the teacher. A student's attendance for each quarter is documented on the report card.

Each RLA school follows the district's attendance policy and maintains adequate attendance records for each student within the building.

1. The attendance clerk calls the legal parent or guardian at home or work, using telephone numbers provided, to verify all occurrences of absence and late arrival.
2. Teachers verify daily attendance in each class and record individual student attendance in the Student Information System.
3. Teachers call parents/guardians to discuss absenteeism concerns.
4. Teachers alert the attendance team of chronic absenteeism concerns.
5. The attendance team at each RLA school monitors student absences and follows the district's attendance policy and building protocol in terms of communication, reporting, and attendance letters.

Class Configuration

Students learning remotely attend online with their peers from throughout the district. Depending on enrollment, grade-level or course rosters may be combined. For example, there may be a class of first- and second-graders, or a mix of older students taking World Language 3 and 4. Secondary level course offerings are limited.

Residency

To be eligible for the Remote Learning Academy, a student must be a Rush-Henrietta resident and physically live within school district boundaries. Any student moving outside district boundaries during the year will be unenrolled from Rush-Henrietta and any materials must be returned.

Food Service/Student Meals

The Rush-Henrietta Central School District provides access to free meals (breakfast and lunch) for students learning remotely on scheduled school days. Meals are provided weekly, and are picked up at a central location (Senior High School cafeteria). In order to participate, parents/guardians complete a survey at the beginning of the year indicating their interest in participating. A pre-order request is completed each week for the upcoming week's meals.

Student Management

Character Development

The Rush-Henrietta Central School District Board of Education is committed to providing a safe, inclusive, equitable, and orderly school environment where students may receive, and district personnel may deliver, quality educational services without disruption or interference.

The school district is committed to ensuring that each student is healthy, safe, engaged, supported, and challenged; helping students develop self-discipline and social and emotional growth; and guiding students in improvement and correction of inappropriate, unacceptable, and unsafe behaviors. Responsible behavior by students, district employees, parents/guardians and other visitors is expected, as it is essential to achieving this goal.

The district has a long-standing set of expectations for behavior on school property, including the school bus and at school functions. These expectations are based on the principles of civility, mutual respect, citizenship, character, tolerance, honesty, and integrity. These expectations apply to students whether they learn in-person or are enrolled in the RLA.

The expectations are enhanced by Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) practices, Restorative Practices, and the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) framework, which identifies five attributes that students are expected to demonstrate consistently in all areas of the remote learning setting: Be Caring, Be Ready to Learn, Be Respectful, Be Responsible, and Be Trustworthy.

Student Behavior: Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS)

Staff and students in the Remote Learning Academy program follow the RLA host school's tiered interventions appropriate for the grade level.

The Tier 1 level has universal interventions for all students and systems that teach expectations, acknowledge positive behaviors, and help ensure fair and consistent consequences. These include PBIS, classroom Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) strategies and lessons, community-building circles, differentiated support, communication with families, and initial interventions.

Tier 2 interventions are used for students needing additional support beyond Tier 1 interventions. These may include check-in/check-out, behavior contracts, daily behavior forms, small group counseling, targeted student circles, peer modeling, mindfulness strategies, Instructional Support Team/Behavior Support Team (IST/BST) referral, utilizing Professional Learning Communities (PLC) for consultation/collaboration, and increased parent involvement.

If needed, the RLA staff will utilize Tier 3 approaches to provide intensive support for students. Interventions at this level are most effective when there are Tier 1 and Tier 2 interventions and supports already in place. Tier 3 supports may include individual counseling, Functional Behavioral Assessment and Behavioral Intervention Plan (FBA/BIP), additional use of restorative practices, home visits, and/or referrals to community agencies.

Management of Student Behaviors

Remote Learning Academy students follow the district's Code of Conduct and RLA guidelines for appropriate behavior. School staff create opportunities for restorative practices (problem-solving, repairing harm, and restorative conversations) whenever possible. Teachers use the discipline process of the RLA host school and follow protocols for referring students with behavior issues, mental or social-emotional concerns, and absenteeism.

Curriculum and Instruction

Rush-Henrietta curriculum remains aligned to New York state standards. Teachers identify the essential content and skills to streamline curriculum and design blended learning lessons. Teachers use professional discretion to decide what content and skills are most essential from the curriculum to meet standards and prepare for assessments. The pacing of instruction is adjusted to adhere to a remote-learning model using best practices. In the remote environment, student learning tasks remain manageable, practical, and equitable.

Teachers use both synchronous and asynchronous teaching methods during remote instruction.

Synchronous learning features learning experiences that involve live, real-time interaction with the teacher. Synchronous learning may be used for large-group, small-group, and/or individualized, direct instruction; collaborative discussions; writing conferences; intervention services; student assistance; and community-building and social-emotional learning experiences. In this model, synchronous learning is conducted through video conferencing.

Asynchronous learning features learning experiences that do not involve a live, real-time interaction with the teacher. Instead, asynchronous learning experiences may take the form of watching a recorded video of the teacher providing direct instruction; viewing a video of another teacher from an educational resource teaching a skill; conducting research; solving problem-based inquiries; reading and responding to an article; working on a math or science problem, etc.

Instructional Delivery Model

Instruction includes synchronous (live instruction) and asynchronous (directed, independent instruction) learning using the district's digital platform. Synchronous instruction occurs using Google Meet. Students do not spend a full school day, or even a full class period, receiving synchronous instruction. Rather, classes include both synchronous and asynchronous learning as directed by the teacher. At times, asynchronous work is required to be completed prior to the next synchronous session. Students have a set daily schedule to meet online with a teacher in both large- and small-group instruction along with other remote-learning peers across the district in their grade level or course. All students have access to - and have daily interaction with - a teacher five days a week. Teachers provide students with daily instruction in order to support both their academic needs and social-emotional well-being.

The educational program delivered in the remote model employs the best instructional practices and online resources, while being mindful of maximizing instructional time and supporting students. All students receive a district Chromebook, technology support as needed, and the necessary resources for their grade level/courses (textbook, math manipulatives, novels, student whiteboards, etc.). Students have access to the school library collections as well as instructional materials.

All students are provided instruction designed to enable them to achieve New York State Learning Standards. Students have access to high-quality rigorous instructional opportunities

and experiences provided by a certified teacher. Instructional experiences are not defined solely as a student's time spent with a teacher or in front of a screen, but time engaged in standards-based learning under the guidance and direction of a teacher. Instructional experiences must include meaningful feedback on student assignments and methods of tracking student engagement. It is the district's responsibility to ensure that student learning is supported, and students have access to assistance from a qualified teacher when they need it.

Student Assessment

Elementary and secondary district assessment plans include the most essential assessments to be administered. Administrators monitor the implementation of assessments as they collaborate with teachers to make adjustments as needed throughout the year. All assessments are administered online for remote students. Assessments may be taken synchronously or asynchronously, and may or may not occur during a scheduled class period. Teachers decide, based on content and the assessment, how best to assess student learning.

Students are required to complete state and district assessments. Formative measures also are given within lessons. Assessment information is used to inform instruction and monitor student progress. District guidelines for assessing, grading, and reporting are followed. Teachers report student progress, attendance, and grades on a quarterly basis.

Student Support Services

English as a New Language (ENL), special education, and related services, is provided to eligible students. For special education students, the amount of special education service is determined by a student's IEP. Counseling, social work, and health services also are provided to assist students and families. To the extent possible, services are provided synchronously, with asynchronous support as well. All student support services are provided by the staff at the school hosting the RLA program. The building allocation of staff will be adjusted to reflect total student enrollment, including the RLA students. A reallocation of resources may be necessary once attendance is finalized for the number of RLA students and new entrants to a school for in-person learning.

Academic Intervention Services

Students complete district assessments or screeners to inform teachers of academic gaps. These assessments, among other indicators, identify students to receive academic intervention services or inform classroom teachers of instructional gaps. Intervention services are provided by classroom teachers. For students in need of more intensive services, reading teachers and/or math specialists provide instruction in addition to the classroom teacher. To the extent possible, services are provided synchronously, with asynchronous support as well.

All academic support is provided by the staff at the school hosting the RLA. This consists mainly of classroom teachers and support service teachers, as needed. The building allocation of staff will be adjusted to reflect total student enrollment, including RLA students. A reallocation may be necessary once rosters of RLA students and new entrants to a school for in-person learning are finalized. Intervention services are provided synchronously to the extent possible.

Progress Monitoring of Student Achievement

The principal of each school hosting the RLA, along with instructional support staff, progress-monitors RLA student academic growth following the same protocols used for all students within the school. The school staff is responsible for providing the appropriate levels of student support and necessary interventions. Communication regarding concerns in student progress is communicated to guardians by the classroom teacher and host school principal and support staff as needed. The host school is responsible for accountability of RLA student achievement for data reporting purposes.

Instructional Technology

Established platforms such as eDoctrina, SchoolTool, and G-Suite (and other program-specific online resources) are consistent platforms that teachers and students are accustomed to using. A district protocol, Google Classroom Management Expectations, has been established for teachers to follow while assigning and collecting student work. The district Information and Communication Technology (ICT) curriculum remains embedded in teacher instruction so students can continue to build their digital fluency skills. All teachers and students have reliable methods of communication (district email, private comments in Google Classroom and other G-Suite tools, and Google Meet) to support any learning location. ICT coaches are available to support the utilization of all technology tools.

Technology Support and Troubleshooting

RLA students should contact the library at their assigned home school for support with troubleshooting issues with Chromebooks or any district-assigned websites or online programs. If a family has limited internet access or connectivity issues, they should contact the Technology Services Helpdesk to discuss possible solutions.

Staffing

The RLA program is provided by the Rush-Henrietta Central School District. Administrative oversight and instructional delivery is provided by district staff. RLA teachers and administrators are responsible for the teaching, learning, and student management of remote-learning classrooms. The district's remote learning program is separate from the county BOCES remote program and does not utilize other online teaching services. In the event a student support service or advanced course requirement can not be fulfilled by district staff, other remote resources and/or staff may be secured, if necessary. These additional services and resources are not guaranteed.

Teacher Selection Process

The Office of Human Resources surveys teachers to solicit interest in remote-teaching opportunities, seeking those with a willingness to work remotely and who demonstrate a strong interest and skill set for remote teaching. Teachers are selected based on interest and experience. In the event there is a need for more teachers, the district assigns teachers to remote-learning classes. All remote staff receive the necessary training and resources needed to effectively teach in a remote-learning environment (see professional development section).

Teacher Assignments

Teachers assigned to remote-learning classes are assigned - and report - to the school building identified for the Remote Learning Academy. RLA teachers have classrooms/space at the school housing their grade-level band of the RLA. In the event additional sections or part-time support is needed for RLA teachers in the school providing the RLA, they will be reallocated from in-person to remote-learning assignment. The goal is to keep all remote-learning sections and support within the RLA school and prevent crossover from other schools not supporting the RLA. All full-time and part-time remote teachers are within one identified school.

Teacher Supervision

Teachers assigned to remote-learning classes are supervised by the principal of the host school to which they are assigned. This model allows for consistent supervision of staff and students for which the principal is accountable. The school principal (or assistant principal, if needed) serves as the primary observer of the remote-learning teachers in that school. RLA teachers have outside observations completed by the technology director. This allows for an evaluation process giving teachers an accurate evaluation and feedback from an administrator closely and frequently interacting with the teacher, and is able to observe the teacher's instruction and

professionalism on a regular basis. In addition, the RLA principal and technology director have an appropriate remote-learning knowledge and skill set to provide meaningful feedback for teacher growth.

Teacher Schedule

Remote teachers follow the same school schedule as in-person teachers.

Teacher Short-Term Absences

A teacher who is out for the day reports that absence to the main office of the RLA host school. RLA teachers should not contact sub callers to report absences. Instead of making substitute-teacher plans, it is the professional responsibility of the teacher to prepare asynchronous instruction that day for students. It is up to the teacher to alert (email) parents (K-6) or students (7-12) that lessons will be asynchronous that day and to share that asynchronous learning can be found in Google Classroom.

Teachers should consider designing some asynchronous lessons in advance of being absent, similar to emergency sub plans that are often kept on file in the main offices.

Teacher Long-term or Emergency Absences

All long-term (more than five days) or emergency absences where asynchronous lessons can not be developed should be reported to the main office at the RLA host school. The principal works with Human Resources to secure a substitute. The substitute is given access and support to meet with students.

Faculty and Program Meetings

Typically, teachers attend their RLA host school's faculty meetings and the same program meetings as their in-person counterparts. On rare occasions, RLA teachers may be excused from those meetings by their principal or director to attend dedicated professional development on remote learning.

Professional Development

The technology director is responsible for identifying long-range professional learning goals for RLA teachers. The director of professional learning works with the technology director to plan, coordinate, communicate, and monitor professional learning opportunities. Both directors work in collaboration with teachers, ICT coaches, library media specialists, and RLA principals to identify remote teaching opportunities, needs, resources, and support.

The director of professional learning coordinates, budgets for, communicates, and provides the professional development/training for RLA teachers. ICT coaches provide embedded support on best instructional strategies, delivery of all assessments in a virtual environment, and support all remote students in learning. Library media specialists and content area coaches at the host school are available to support teachers with instructional coaching and resources.

Conference periods, faculty meetings, and program meetings are used to provide professional development. Book studies and district workshops (in-person and virtual) are available. RLA teachers are encouraged to participate in online webinars, as needed. Adequate funding is provided for teachers to self-select webinars of interest with director of professional learning approval.

The technology director provides professional development to develop the administrator's capacity to effectively observe teachers in a remote environment. This helps ensure that teachers are getting quality feedback and accurate assessment of their instruction.

APPENDIX A

[Link to 2020-2021 RLA Program Evaluation Executive Summary](#)