Local Educational Agency (LEA) Name | Contact Name and Title | Email and Phone | Date of Adoption
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Walden Academy Charter School | Suzanne Tefs Director | leadershipteam@waldenacademy.org (530) 361-6480 | June 22, 2020

Descriptions provided should include sufficient detail yet be sufficiently succinct to promote a broader understanding of the changes your LEA has put in place. LEAs are strongly encouraged to provide descriptions that do not exceed 300 words.

Provide an overview explaining the changes to program offerings that the LEA has made in response to school closures to address the COVID-19 emergency and the major impacts of the closures on students and families.

On March 17th, Walden Academy closed the school campus and immediately began distance education through online platforms and paper packets. Our top priority was to provide our students with equal amounts of social/emotional support and continued academic learning. We created a variety of options for our families to continue learning at home and to keep the children connected with others despite campus closure. Many classes continued to hold Morning Meetings or something similar with their class via Zoom or on Google Meets to help students feel connected to one another, the teacher, and to support staff. Some of our students require and thrive on the structure of the school day, so teachers and support staff assisted families in creating learning schedules. We made Chromebooks available to every family that needed one. Teachers and staff supported parents and students with technology issues. Every teacher held virtual meetings that covered new and review academic content in whole class, small group, or 1 on 1 format. The school psychologist checked in on key students routinely to find out how they were feeling and determine other supports they needed. The mental health clinician contacted students on the caseload to determine their wellbeing and find out what supports they may need. We offered online tutoring by support staff to assist students that struggled with content, organization, or those struggling in general. Administration and staff made contact with families to offer assistance in other ways. We kept parents abreast of programs offered in the community for food and other areas of support.

Provide a description of how the LEA is meeting the needs of its English learners, foster youth and low-income students.

Students from low-income homes and English learners required additional support. At the time we didn't have any foster youth, but plans for them would be in line with EL student and low-income student supports. Walden Academy teachers used a variety of high-quality supports to meet the academic needs of our English learners and students from low-income households. The academic support included the following: teachers used the ELD curriculum from the Benchmark Advance with the English learners and struggling students. Teachers included small group and 1 on 1 instruction to further support these students. New concepts were introduced and broken into small steps for accessibility. Students were provided demonstrations and examples of concepts or problems through the use of document cameras or screen sharing. Teachers front loaded new vocabulary words & concepts using pictures or other visual representations. Many times differentiated instruction and modification of assignments, if needed, were employed. Supports through the use of graphic organizers and sentence stems were provided. Teachers also used read aloud, choice boards, ample opportunities to speak and listen in English, picture books in guided reading groups, and recorded videos with explanations. Our bilingual staff members were exceptionally helpful with families that did not speak English.
Provide a description of the steps that have been taken by the LEA to continue delivering high-quality distance learning opportunities.

Providing a rich learning environment during distant learning is foremost on our minds as we plan for the 2020-21 school year. The staff gathered after the last teaching day to debrief about the past few months. We analyzed what worked well, what did not, what was needed for the future and parent survey data. One area of need in particular is technology training of our parents and younger students. We have a plan in place to train parents at the start of the next year and all students will receive technology training from the first day of school. We believe training will enable our families to access on a more consistent basis the content and enrichment opportunities provided to all our students. We standardized how we will deliver online content for ease of access for our families and students. The teaching staff already began participating in professional development opportunities for distance learning/teaching in April, May and June. Many staff are scheduled for more professional development over summer to help them craft better lessons, overcome hurtles, and provide enriching content. Most of the curriculum we use at Walden Academy has a well-developed online component that the staff began using during distance learning. With increased time over the summer to get to know what is available in each curriculum, higher quality instruction and learning opportunities will be made possible.

Provide a description of the steps that have been taken by the LEA to provide school meals while maintaining social distancing practices.

During the school closure, Walden Academy did not serve meals on our campus. That need was provided for by the local school district, Willows Unified. We disseminated information to our parents on a regular basis via our school communication platform, Parent Square, and on Facebook about the location of the various food access points. In addition, we kept our community informed of food pantry and give away events.

Provide a description of the steps that have been taken by the LEA to arrange for supervision of students during ordinary school hours.

We were not able to provide any student supervision during school hours. The parents of our students did not express a need for student supervision during the school closure.