



AT THE HEART OF EDUCATION



Remote Learning: 4 steps to success



Remote learning district profile

Forsyth County School District, Georgia

- 49,800 Students
- 38 Schools
- Eliminated the need for make-up days

Forsyth County School District is familiar with school closures due to dangerous weather conditions. For the past six years, when the district has a cancellation, they have been using the itslearning Learning Management System (LMS) to implement eLearning days. Since they have perfected their inclement weather plan, they no longer include make-up days in their school calendar.

School closures can occur for several reasons such as weather or health-related. Any time instruction is interrupted, you stand to lose your classroom momentum and your students' focus. More schools are implementing remote learning instead of cancelling school, but there are many obstacles to consider when getting started. Having the right digital tools is essential for eLearning success.

In this guide, we offer step-by-step instructions for planning and implementing remote learning in your school. With best practices from schools that have successfully launched online learning programs and a handy checklist for getting started – time lost on cancellations can be a thing of the past.

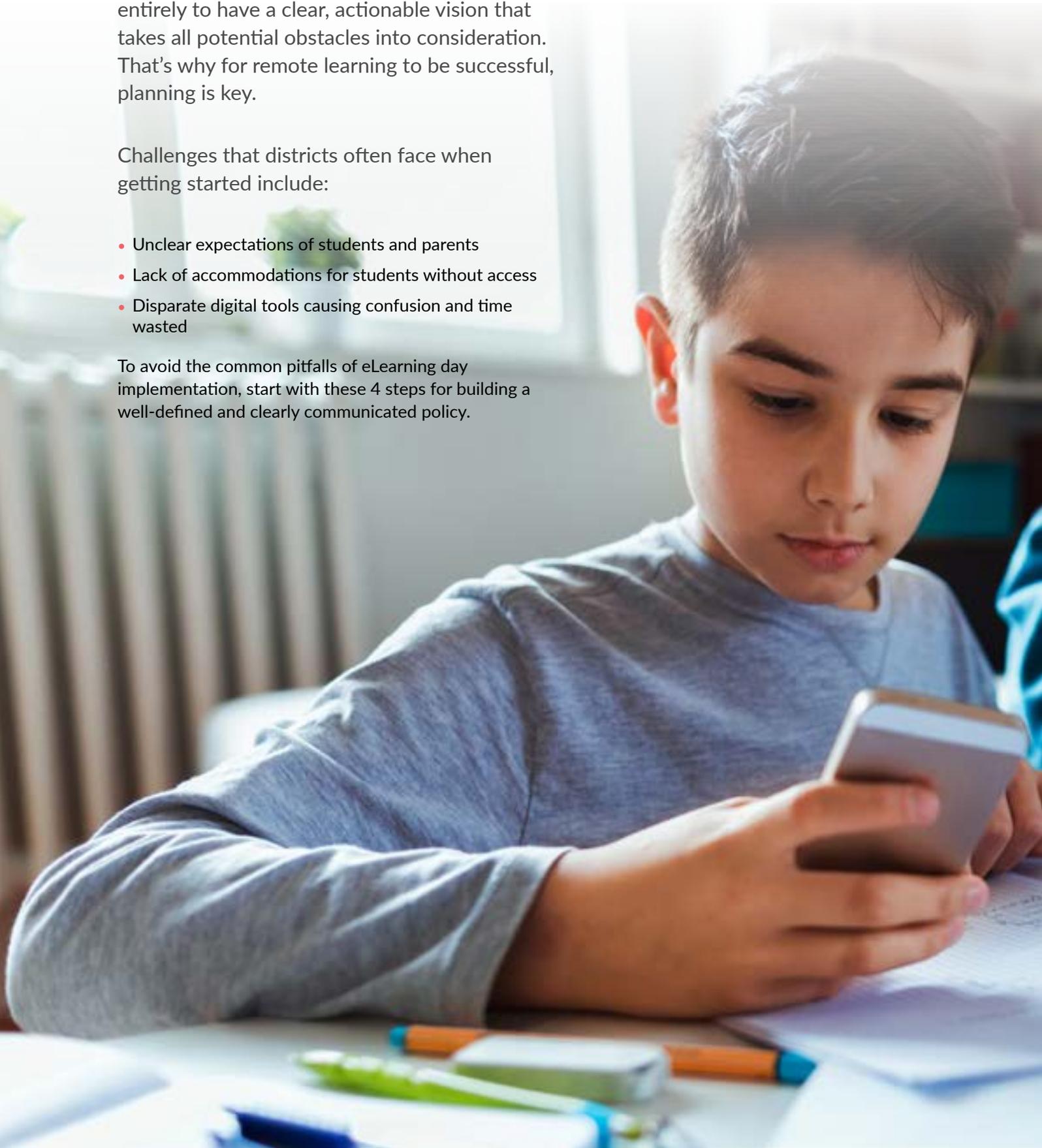
4 major steps to remote learning success

It's one thing to have a plan, it's another thing entirely to have a clear, actionable vision that takes all potential obstacles into consideration. That's why for remote learning to be successful, planning is key.

Challenges that districts often face when getting started include:

- Unclear expectations of students and parents
- Lack of accommodations for students without access
- Disparate digital tools causing confusion and time wasted

To avoid the common pitfalls of eLearning day implementation, start with these 4 steps for building a well-defined and clearly communicated policy.



1

Gain support from all stakeholders

Before mapping out your strategy for remote learning, make sure that stakeholders in your school or university are informed of your intentions and be sure to get their feedback. This includes your curriculum, technology and instructional staff, as well as students and parents. Start by sending a survey to everyone involved. Use this as a chance to introduce them to the idea and to open the discussion for ideas and concerns. In these initial stages, also make sure you have sign-off from staff members on the roles they'll play in eLearning days.



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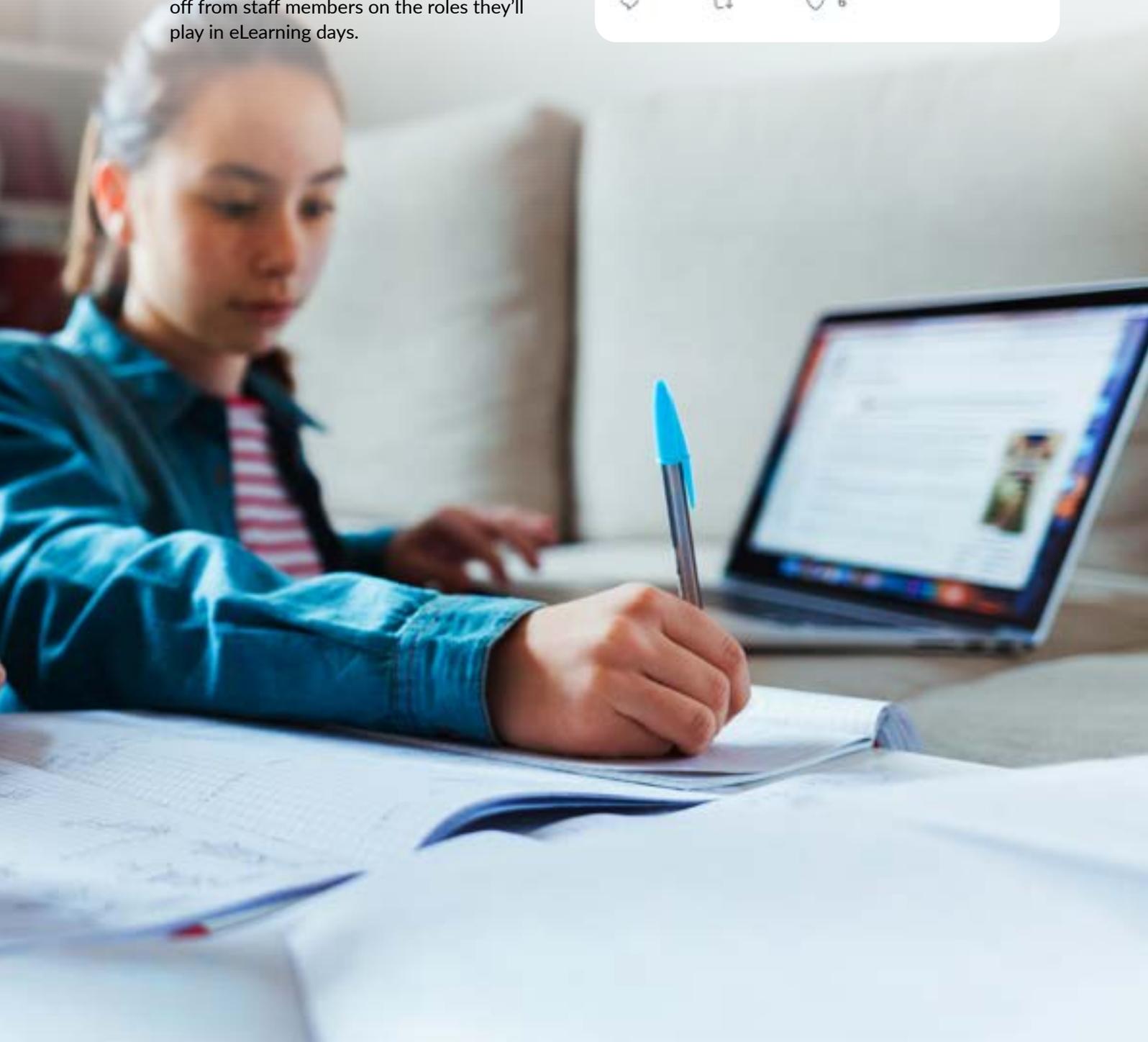
So happy we have [@itslearningUSA](#) in [@FCSchoolsGA](#). No make up days, and no missed learning.

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6 Likes



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2

Identify common oversights and challenges

A common obstacle that schools face when considering online learning days is ensuring digital equity. Some students might not have laptops or internet access at home, or could have power outages due to inclement weather. Here are a few ways to make sure all students can take part in eLearning days:

1. When adopting new classroom technology, make sure that they offer full functionality on all **mobile devices**. Though some students might not have a computer at home, they might have access to a mobile phone or tablet.
2. Include a make-up clause in your policy. If you assign tasks or homework on your eLearning days, give students with no access extra days to make-up the work once school is back in session.
3. Address digital equity early in the year by providing students who lack access with hotspot devices for internet or loaner laptops/tablets for the winter months.

The most effective way to identify complications in your remote learning processes is to practice in advance. Getting in some practice time ensures smooth execution and compliance when the sudden need for an eLearning day arises. This is also a great time to ensure that all stakeholders are properly trained on your digital systems.

3

Develop your remote learning lesson plan

One trick to making remote learning days successful is to treat them like a regular school day. There should be a start and stop time, teachers should post their digital “office hours,” and the day should be structured. Include an eLearning day schedule in your district’s policy, with specific course times, study breaks, and even a “recess”.

With the right digital tools, you can make online learning just as engaging as your usual face-to-face instruction. Having access to digital tools for engagement and a repository with millions of [standards-aligned resources](#) makes it possible for teachers to quickly and easily personalize lessons whether they’re in the classroom or working from home.

Consider these powerful digital tools to make eLearning fun and informative:

Polls and surveys: Teachers can use a poll or survey to motivate students at the start of the day. They can also use them to give instructions, test students on course materials, or get student feedback on recent lessons.

Discussion boards: An excellent tool for fueling student engagement, discussion boards allow teachers to facilitate resource sharing, peer-to-peer assessments, or debates on current events.

Video recordings: Students will be delighted to receive their daily instruction in the form of a video. Teachers can pre-record lessons to better convey difficult concepts and provide clear details on assignments.

Video conferencing: Another engaging way to use video is to set up video conferences with students. Schedule a few minutes with each student as a virtual check-in, or use it to clarify instruction for students that have questions.

Educational games: Expand on lessons by providing students with digital word games, puzzles, simulation exercises, and other games that can improve the understanding of concepts and help develop critical thinking skills.

4

Ensure accountability

Working from home is a great experience for students entering a 21st-century workforce. Self-management is an essential life skill, but it can be difficult for some students facing the varied distractions of home, like a younger sibling who doesn't have eLearning days or the constant lure of social media channels.

To keep students focused during eLearning days, follow these simple rules:

Don't give them any excuse. Provide students with a central hub for all classroom materials, assignments, digital tools, and anything else required to complete tasks. This way they can't claim that they didn't know where to find materials or were unclear on the instructions.

Assign real-time tasks. Include a task that requires visible online activity, like group discussion, video conference, or require that assignments be submitted by a specific time.

Check-in. Easily check-in with students who are inactive using instant messaging or video conferences.

Give voice and choice. Ensure student engagement by giving them choice in how they show what they know. Rather than requiring all students to submit written assignments, give them the option to submit a video, drawing, song or other evidence of learning.



"Our Online Learning Plan for School Closures uses itslearning to engage students, distribute assignments, and facilitate communication between teachers, students and parents when circumstances prohibit face-to-face interaction,"

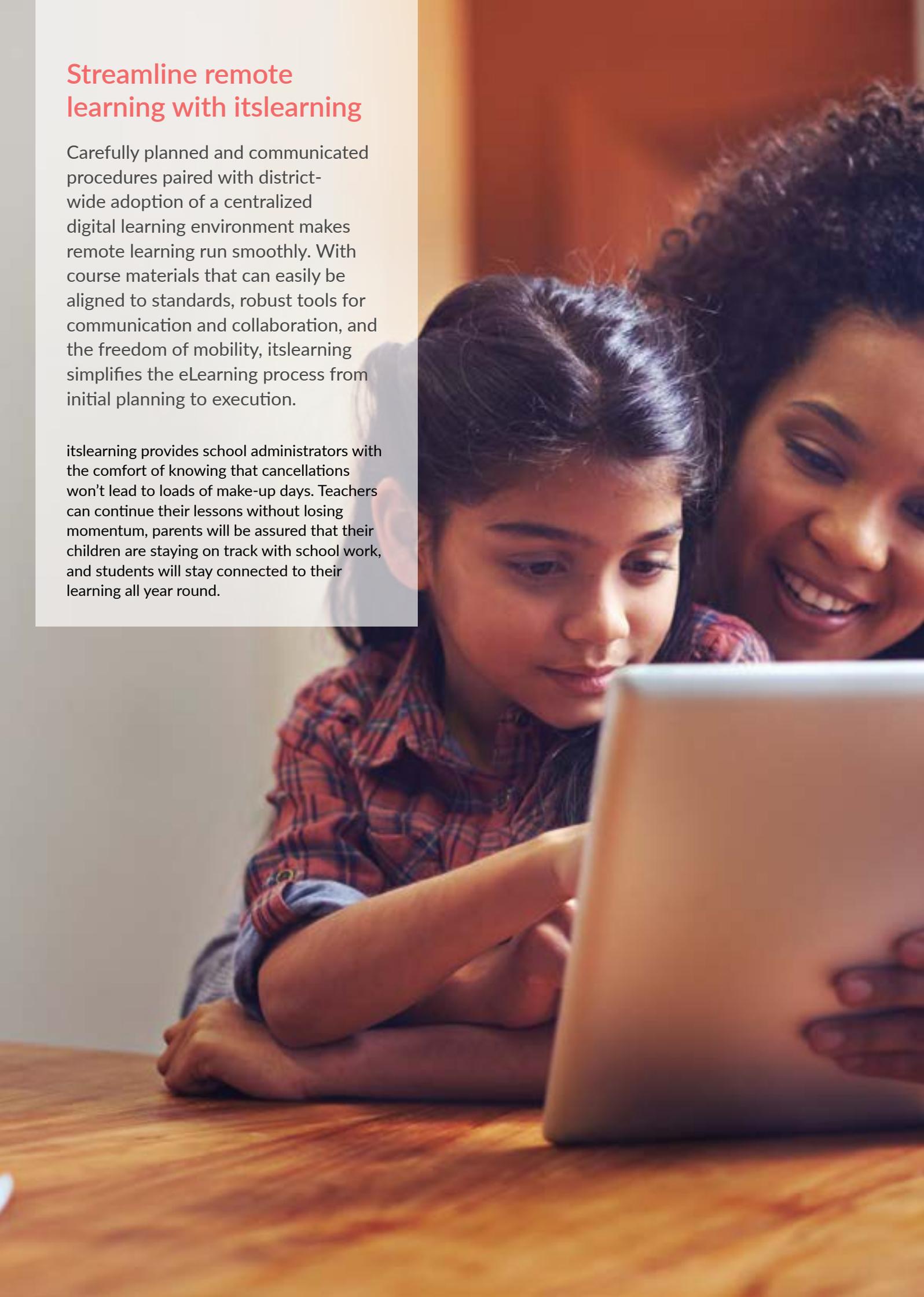
Jason Naile

Director of Instructional Technology and Media, Forsyth County Schools

Streamline remote learning with itslearning

Carefully planned and communicated procedures paired with district-wide adoption of a centralized digital learning environment makes remote learning run smoothly. With course materials that can easily be aligned to standards, robust tools for communication and collaboration, and the freedom of mobility, itslearning simplifies the eLearning process from initial planning to execution.

itslearning provides school administrators with the comfort of knowing that cancellations won't lead to loads of make-up days. Teachers can continue their lessons without losing momentum, parents will be assured that their children are staying on track with school work, and students will stay connected to their learning all year round.



Checklist for planning remote learning

ACTIONS


COMPLETE

1 HAVE YOU RECEIVED INPUT AND APPROVAL FROM ALL KEY STAKEHOLDERS?

2 DO YOU HAVE A CLEAR PROCEDURAL PLAN FOR WHEN CANCELLATIONS OCCUR?

3 HAVE YOU GIVEN DETAILED INSTRUCTIONS TO PARENTS AND STUDENTS ON HOW TO PARTICIPATE IN ELEARNING DAYS?

4 HAVE YOU PROVIDED ACCESS OR CONCESSIONS FOR STUDENTS WHO DON'T HAVE DEVICES OR INTERNET AT HOME?

5 HAVE YOU COMPLETED A DRY-RUN OF YOUR PROCESS WITH EVERYONE INVOLVED?

6 DO YOU HAVE A CENTRALIZED HUB THAT PROVIDES ADMINISTRATORS, TEACHERS, STUDENTS, AND PARENTS EASY ACCESS TO ALL DIGITAL TOOLS, RESOURCES, AND COMMUNICATION?



How we can help you...

As your remote learning partner, we can help you create online learning plans so that learning continues during school closures.

To learn more about itslearning visit
itslearning.com

