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TO: Board of Education  
FROM: John R. Langton, Interim Superintendent  
DATE: April 14, 2025  
RE: Discussion - e-Learning Plan

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## **BACKGROUND**

The current Benjamin School District 25 e-Learning Plan was approved by the DuPage Regional Office of Education in August 2022. This 3-year plan expires in the summer of 2025. The Illinois School Code provides that school districts may, by adopted resolution, utilize “e-Learning days” in lieu of emergency days. The number of e-learning days may not exceed the minimum number of proposed emergency days for the approved calendar, which is five. The school district’s e-Learning program must be verified by the Regional Office of Education prior to implementation. The school board also must hold a public hearing prior to the initial adoption or renewal of an e-Learning program.

## **SUMMARY**

Dr. Woell was aware of conflicting opinions of e-Learning in our community and conducted a survey of parents and teachers in November-December 2024. The survey was designed to gauge preferences of the use of an e-Learning Day or an Emergency Day (snow day). Following two guiding questions, survey respondents responded with the following results:

Parents: 85 respondents (represents 21% of all D25 families)

1. *Would you prefer to continue with an e-learning day plan in lieu of snow days or just have a snow day and use an emergency day at the end of the school year?*  
64 Prefer using an e-Learning Day = 75%  
21 Prefer using an Emergency “Snow” Day = 25%
2. *If e-learning continues after this school year, would you like to continue with the current plan?*  
67 Yes = 79%  
18 No = 21%

Teachers: 47 respondents out of 72 teachers (represents 65% of all D25 teachers)

1. *Would you prefer to continue with an ELearning Day plan in lieu of snow days, or just have a snow day and use an emergency day at the end of the school year*  
36 Prefer using an e-Learning Day = 77%  
11 Prefer using an Emergency “Snow” Day = 23%
2. *If ELearning continues after this school year, would you like to continue with the current plan?*  
45 Yes = 96%  
2 No = 4%

Some of the respondents from both groups also shared additional comments to clarify their feelings. The most prominent concern was that our current e-Learning Plan utilizes only asynchronous learning with little, if any, interaction with teachers. *Note...* synchronous learning involves real-time interaction between students and teachers, similar to traditional classroom experiences, but virtual. Whereas, asynchronous learning involves independent learning with materials posted or provided by the teacher and completed by the students without real-time interactions with a teacher.

Based on the survey responses, it is clear that three-fourths of the parent respondents (21% of all D25 families) and three-fourths of our teachers (65% of all D25 teachers) prefer e-learning. Many comments express wanting to avoid making up a “snow day” at the end of the school year. Additionally, a majority of both groups prefer continuing with the current plan, which utilizes asynchronous learning.

A decision needs to be made to either (1) not apply for a new e-Learning Plan or (2) apply for a new e-Learning Plan. However, the application of a new plan requires a determination to utilize either asynchronous or synchronous learning.

I have not met anyone who feels that any form of e-Learning provides quality instruction or learning for our students. My reflection of this decision, from an objective perspective, focuses only on what is best for our students and their families, not for what is most convenient for having to make-up a day of school.

The Board of Education is in the process of hiring a new Superintendent. This individual will have the responsibility of leading our school district and our instructional programs, which would include an e-Learning program. I have verified with the Regional Superintendent of Schools that there is no deadline for getting a plan approved. I suggest that our new Superintendent lead an e-Learning Focus Group early next school year, composed of teachers and parents, with the sole focus of determining if e-Learning is best for our students and their families compared with using emergency days. If the Focus Group concludes that e-Learning is the best option, they can then develop a new e-Learning Plan to present to the Board of Education for consideration. This work could be completed by October, allowing time for the DuPage Regional Office of Education to review and accept a plan.

### **RECOMMENDATION(S)**

I recommend that the Board of Education discuss my review of e-Learning and reach consensus on directing the new Superintendent to lead an e-Learning Focus Group next Fall.