

Labor Policy Guidance: DOE-UFT Digital Classroom Agreement

General: The DOE recently reached an agreement with the UFT regarding use of digital classrooms under certain circumstances. The key points of the agreement are highlighted below, and principals are encouraged to read the [full agreement](#) and review the related [PowerPoint](#), which contains additional details about payment, evaluation, and other parameters that can support implementation.

- **Set-Up:** All active school-based teachers and Lab Specialists and mandated related service providers (OT/PT, Guidance, Psychologist, Social Worker, Audiologist) set up their digital classrooms on a DOE-approved platform.
 - School-based teachers and mandated related service providers (OT/PT, Guidance, Psychologist, Social Worker, Audiologist, Lab Specialist) that were **hired after October 1, 2021** are eligible for \$225.00 or four (4) hours at the per-session rate or applicable hourly rate, provided they complete the digital classroom set-up.
 - Employees shall receive an additional four (4) hours at the per session rate, or applicable hourly rate, to reprogram their digital classrooms each time more than half of the employees' overall student caseload is reprogrammed at one time.
 - As mentioned in the [Payroll Implementation Guidance](#), schools have the discretion to provide the funding for other titles to prepare for digital learning provided such funding is available for all UFT represented employees in that title within that school.
- **Use:** Digital classrooms are to be used for instruction in the following circumstances:
 - **Full Class or Full School Closure** (defined below)
 - **Partial Class Closure** (defined below)
 - **Snow Days/Weather-Related Closures** (schools will pivot to synchronous, remote instruction)
 - **Election Day**
- **Full Class or School Closure:** For purposes of this agreement, a “full school closure” or “full class closure” is when the NYCDOE/DOH situation room issues a directive to the school administration that the whole school or a whole class (or session) is required to quarantine. Impacted classrooms will pivot to synchronous remote instruction for the duration of the emergency closure. If all of the students in a school-based teacher’s program or mandated related service provider’s schedule are fully remote, the teacher/provider shall be permitted to work remotely (synchronous and on camera) but may, with reasonable advance notice, be directed to return on-site by their supervisor.
- **Partial Closures:** For the purposes of this agreement, a “partial closure” is defined when the NYCDOE/DOH situation room issues a directive to the school administration that one or more students are required to quarantine (*e.g.*, part of a class is quarantined/unable to attend in-person instruction). Teachers and mandated related services providers will continue to serve all in-person students consistent with the current program. Students who are quarantined as a result of this directive will receive remote instruction in the form of asynchronous learning activities and Office Hours (as described herein).
 - For each partial closure of two or more days, school-based teachers and other mandated related service providers shall provide two Office Hours sessions per each school week impacted by the partial closure and such time is for asynchronous instruction and connecting with students. Teachers in middle and high schools may receive an additional (1) hour per session hour per additional course (not section). **Note:** once a teacher has been notified that a partial closure will take place and will be two or more days, the teacher may begin posting asynchronous work and holding Office Hours as soon as they are notified of the quarantine order at the teacher’s discretion.
 - One of the two Office Hours sessions shall be scheduled at a time during which students and teachers can connect.
 - Office Hours may occur: (1) during the regular contractual workday as paid preparation periods or lunch periods and/or (2) after school paid at the per session rate or the applicable hourly rate at a time that is suggested by the school-based teacher or other mandated related service provider and subject to supervisory approval.
 - **Note:** If a student fails the health screen and there is no directive from the NYCDOE/DOHMH situation room to quarantine, or a student is absent (not-COVID related), this is treated as a regular absence and is not a partial closure. In this scenario, teachers cannot be required to provide asynchronous instruction and Office Hours as set forth in this Agreement. However, staff are expected to engage in normal past practices with respect to non-COVID student absences and may, with prior supervisory approval, provide Office Hours and shall be compensated accordingly.

The Digital Classroom UFT/DOE neither permits nor prohibits any prior practices around the use of digital classrooms. This agreement is limited to the emergency closures for this school year and does not prohibit or restrict the implementation of a digital classroom in other circumstances. For assistance, please contact your Senior Field Counsel, COVIDtimekeeping, or Office of Labor Relations.

SAMPLE SCENARIOS

Scenario	School-Level Decision/Consideration	Instruction & Office Hours
All students are required to quarantine and teacher/related service provider is vaccinated/not required to quarantine.	Teacher/related service provider shall be permitted to work remotely and, with reasonable advance notice, may be directed to return on-site.	In full class closures, all students learn remotely and synchronously and teachers are not required to provide asynchronous instruction or Office Hours.
Some students are required to quarantine per NYCDOE/DOHMH Situation Room and teacher/related service provider is vaccinated/not required to quarantine.	Teacher/related service provider continues regular program with in-person students.	If the quarantine period is over 2 days, the teacher shall provide asynchronous instruction and Office Hours for quarantined students.
Student(s) fails health screen and no directive to quarantine/remain home from NYCDOE/DOHMH Situation Room.	Teacher/related service provider continues regular program with in-person students.	This is treated as a regular student absence. There is no contractual obligation to provide Office Hours or asynchronous instruction as defined in Agreement. Teachers should engage in past practices for supporting absent students.