

## THE REACH ASSOCIATE’S ROLE DURING AT-HOME/HYBRID SCHOOLING

Reach associates (RAs) are advanced paraprofessionals who contribute to excellence on a multi-classroom leader’s team by providing instructional and noninstructional support to the team, as designated by the multi-classroom leader (MCL).

RAs play a crucial role in supporting excellent teachers who extend their reach, with and without the help of technology, to many more students. In most cases, RAs fill two primary roles:

- working independently with groups of students so that the MCL and team reach teacher(s) can help more students without increasing instructional group sizes—by supervising time on projects, skills practice, and digital learning, and/or by instructing students in small groups or individually; and
- helping the MCL team complete noninstructional duties so that they have more time for planning and collaboration. RAs keep students engaged and focused during transitions, lunch, recess, assemblies, and other unstructured activities, and while teachers deliver instruction or collaborate in teams. RAs help develop students’ social-emotional skills during these activities and instruction.

When schools must shift to some or all teaching and learning at home, how might the RA role change to continue to support the team and students?

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This guidance is based on the schedule and staffing model options created during the COVID-19 shutdowns: [Multi-Classroom Leadership with Students and Teachers in Multiple Locations](#) and [Multi-Classroom Leadership with Students and Teachers at Home](#), which provide full-day and half-day schedule examples for elementary and secondary schools. In any model option, multi-classroom leaders should establish expectations for teachers and reach associates; they should expect confusion to arise when roles are changing, and clarify when needed.

#### RA Responsibilities: Before Instruction

- Conduct academic and social-emotional outreach to students, checking in personally to see how they are feeling and sharing observations with teachers. Helping the teaching team build and maintain relationships with students at these times can be a crucial role for RAs.
- Review all lessons and materials with the MCL or team reach teacher (TRT) to familiarize themselves with the topic and prepare to help students with the material.

#### RA Responsibilities: During Instruction

- Support and supervise students when working on skills practice, project work, and/or digital instruction, as directed by the MCL, in person or remotely, and help them finish all work or answer questions. Students may be in-person or “logged in” with the RA part of the time, even though the student may be finishing work by hand (math problems, writing, reading an assigned book, for example).
- Teach small groups in person, by videoconference, or both together as directed by the MCL and TRTs.
- Provide extra time to help students complete assignments, online or in person, when needed.
- If applicable: Monitor students and technology in person in the school building while the at-home teacher teaches.

### RA Responsibilities: After Instruction

- Check which students have completed assignments and work with the MCL/TRT to ensure that all students are aware of assignments and completing schoolwork.
- Help check students' work and alert the MCL or TRT to work that needs to be reviewed with the student or class.
- Again, conduct academic and social-emotional outreach to students, checking in personally to see how they are feeling and sharing observations with teachers.

### Notes on Staffing and Scheduling

**When students and teachers are in multiple locations,** schools must carefully calculate the number of in-school teachers, reach associates, and other assistants needed to supervise all students at the school in socially distanced classrooms—especially when some teachers are at home full time. RAs will already have instructional supervision responsibilities in most schools, so they will need to stay with their assigned classes.

When a grade does not have enough RAs or assistants needed for supervision, use larger spaces, such as the media center or gymnasium, for combined classes, still totaling no more than regular classroom maximums in the larger rooms; maintain social distancing, possibly dividing class spaces with some physical barriers, like covered bookshelves. This allows assistants or reach associates to monitor more than one group safely. Schools should follow current CDC guidelines for physical safety.

**When all students and teachers are at home,** the goal is to provide students with face-to-face connections with each teacher and classmates; optimize use of other online learning; limit total screen time; and provide flexibility for when technology shortcomings and family disruptions affect students. The RA duties remain the same as in hybrid examples, but are all done remotely. MCLs may guide RAs to conduct extra outreach to help students who are struggling with school work and to do frequent phone or video check-ins with students and families.