

What is a digital learning environment?

Face to Face students will receive in-person instruction enhanced with digital learning experiences. As 21st Century learners, all RCSS students will have the opportunity to learn and demonstrate mastery of learning using a variety of digital tools and experiences.

Synchronous vs. Asynchronous Instruction: What is the difference?

- **Synchronous** teaching allows the teacher(s) and students to gather in real time using a virtual online meeting tool such as Microsoft Teams in order to engage, review, and discuss material and assignments.
- **Asynchronous** learning allows students to learn the same material at different times and locations. The term includes online learning in which students learn from instruction—such as prerecorded video lessons or game-based learning tasks that students complete on their own—that is not being delivered in person or in real time

The chart below provides examples of synchronous and asynchronous sessions. It is a good starting point in observing the different characteristics of synchronous and asynchronous learning.

	Synchronous Learning	Asynchronous Learning
Definition	Synchronous learning is remote learning where everyone from a given group is online at the same time using Canvas Conferences or Microsoft Teams within Canvas.	Asynchronous learning is remote learning where students access pre-recorded lessons or independent learning tasks at any time during the day.
What does this look like?	<p>Checking in with students regarding their social emotional wellness, building community, and establishing personal connections.</p> <p>Providing gradual release practice (I do, we do, you do)</p> <p>Engaging students in discussions to ensure understanding of information.</p> <p>Previewing or explaining assignments or expectations of learning tasks.</p> <p>Answering student questions.</p> <p>Conducting small group instruction.</p> <p>Modeling or sharing examples of final products.</p>	<p>Viewing recorded instructional videos of lessons in a content area.</p> <p>Listening to read alouds and answering questions.</p> <p>Engaging in online discussion by reading and posting responses in Canvas.</p> <p>Reading posted literary selections and responding.</p> <p>Researching and synthesizing information.</p> <p>Completing independent learning tasks and assignments.</p> <p>Providing feedback on student-peer work.</p> <p>Presenting content in multi-media formats.</p>

F2F Expectations for Digital Resource Use During In-Person Instruction

- During in-person instruction, Canvas, [See Saw](#), and other digital resources should be used to *support and reinforce student learning*. As we prepare our 21st Century students for life beyond the classroom, our digital resources should allow students to enhance learning using the 4 C's: Critical Thinking, Collaboration, Communication, and Creativity. For ongoing instructional tips, follow our [Instruction before Technology \(I Before T\) podcasts](#).
- Provide classroom expectations and group norms for online and digital tasks by reviewing the RCSS [Acceptable Internet Use Policy](#) and reviewing the importance of Digital Citizenship. Include [Common Sense Media](#) lessons when appropriate.
- Create a flipped classroom by providing articles, videos, discussions, etc. for students to complete prior to in-person instruction. This allows the F2F teacher the opportunity to maximize their in-person class time for direct instruction, small group instruction, peer collaboration, and individualized support sessions.
- Students may submit assignments in Canvas or other digital learning tools during in-person instruction when appropriate. Administer quizzes and tests through Canvas during class when appropriate to provide immediate feedback and customized [Mastery Paths](#) based on student responses.
- Encourage students to use FEV Tutoring 1:1 virtual tutoring services.
- Canvas, [See Saw](#), and other digital resources should NOT be used a substitute for student-teacher or student-student interaction during in-person instruction.

F2F Expectations for Digital Resources Use During Asynchronous Instruction (Homework)

- As a homework hub, Canvas and [See Saw](#) can serve as an effective place to house all assignments and resources in one location.
- When creating asynchronous assignments (homework), please keep in mind your students' access to technology tools and Internet availability. Students with devices, but no Internet should be given the opportunity to download assignments for offline work. Students without access to digital tools should be given alternate resources to ensure equitable access to student learning goals and experiences. These students should NOT be penalized for not completing an online assignment.
- Whether the asynchronous assignment (homework) uses technology or not, always consider that amount and purpose of the assignment. The learning should be meaningful.
- Asynchronous assignments should be given during the in-person class period so that all students have access. It is NOT appropriate to provide time-limited assignments outside the in-person class period (ex: assigning work in Canvas at 4:00 pm and expecting it to be completed by 8:00pm that same day).
- A Note on Homework: As a rule of thumb, elementary students should not have more than 15-45 minutes of homework Monday-Thursday and secondary students should not have more than 30-90 minutes of homework Monday-Friday; college-bound high school students may have 30-60 minutes of homework per college-level course (AP, IB, Dual Enrollment, etc.). (See p 71-72 [GaDOE System for Effective School Instruction](#) for further guidance)



RCSS Digital Instructional Expectations for F2F Teachers

F2F Expectations for the Elementary Learn@Home Environment

What is Learn@Home?

In the event that a student, class, or school transitions to an all remote learning environment, F2F teachers will teach their same students asynchronously and synchronously through our Learn@Home model. F2F teachers will provide their students with material to cover the length of the quarantine period. Teachers will continue to follow the curriculum map to include new content. The complete unit should be made available at one time so that students can work on the entire unit throughout the quarantine period. Ideally, elementary students will have an opportunity to receive the work before leaving for remote learning.

The due date for all assignments in the remote learning unit will be the first day of return from Learn@Home. If the L@H time is extended, schools may consider an assignment drop-off/pick-up procedure. In addition to asynchronous assignments, the elementary homeroom teacher will make himself/herself available for synchronous instruction for *at least* two hours a day, four days a week (ex: Monday-Thursday 9:00-11:00 and/or 1:00-3:00). Synchronous sessions can include telephone conversations or live Microsoft Teams meetings with students joining online or by phone. Students who cannot attend synchronous sessions will not be penalized. The school administration will coordinate specials and other school specific programming according to the needs of the school. A *sample* schedule is included below. **Schools who are able to provide more than two hours of support four days a week are encouraged to do so.**

Sample Schedule	F2F (M-Th)	Asynchronous Fridays
7:30-8:45	<i>Teacher Planning</i>	Homeroom and Specials Teachers provide tutoring or conferencing as needed. Students work asynchronously.
8:45-9:00	School Morning Show	
9:00-11:00	Homeroom Block	
11:00-12:00	Tutoring, if needed	
12:00-1:00	<i>Lunch</i>	
1:00-3:00	Repeat Homeroom Block	
3:00-3:15	<i>Teacher Planning</i>	

Communication During Learn@Home

- Maintain ongoing communication with students and parents. [Use ideas from this video to learn different ways to support parents during online learning.](#)
- Be sure that students know [how to access Canvas](#) and their other instructional resources.
- Respond to students and parents within a 24-hr period. Document your form of communication following your school’s protocol.
- Conduct synchronous instruction on your assigned day and time.

Online Environment for Learn@Home

- Remember that your students are in a unique situation. Our F2F students were not given technology devices. Extending compassion over compliance will help build a positive culture in your remote class.
- Use the camera during synchronous support sessions and encourage students to do the same. Be sure to have an appropriate background. Show students how to change theirs. [How to set a background in Teams.](#)
- Teachers and students should follow the school dress code. (see Appendix A)
- If recording synchronous sessions, record selectively. Only record direct instruction that may be beneficial for students to review. Pin the screen that you wish to record and avoid recording students.
- Develop mobile-friendly assignments (tasks that can be completed using the Canvas, Microsoft Teams, and Office 365 apps). Ask yourself: Can the student complete this on a cell phone? Consider the following tips:
 - ✓ Use Modules to organize course content since students will download content by modules.
 - ✓ Do not add prerequisites to your courses if they will be used with students with limited Internet access. The download will not allow content to show up if a prerequisite is set.
 - ✓ Videos should be embedded in the content – not a link to another website.
 - ✓ Discussions cannot be accessed in an offline download. They can see the discussion topic, but cannot participate unless they have access to the Internet.
- Make sure your course content is available offline – see settings ([Canvas Offline](#)).
- Share the tips for downloading and reading offline content prior to leaving for remote learning ([Canvas Offline](#)).
- Have a plan for your students without Internet access. What are their expectations?

Instruction for Learn@Home

- Provide content in Canvas so that students can access everything in one location.
- If you aren't using Canvas Conferences, link Microsoft Teams to your Canvas homepage for synchronous meetings. [Using Microsoft Teams in Canvas](#). OR [Using Canvas Conference as a Presenter](#).
- [View this video for grouping strategies.](#)
- Provide timely and meaningful feedback to students. Be specific and take advantage of teachable moments. Use rubrics and Canvas grading [feedback tools](#) to assist with the workload.
- Follow the [RCSS Curriculum Map](#) and teach the curriculum.
- Be available for tutoring during the designated times and be available to answer questions throughout the workday.
- Provide students with multiple modes of demonstrating competency. Allow students to submit video, audio or written responses using Canvas tools. (See [Universal Design for Learning Strategies](#))

Assessment for Learn@Home

- Provide students with multiple forms of assessments. Assignments, discussion postings, presentations, quizzes, tests, activities, labs, and other course work can be used as a means of assessment. (See [Universal Design for Learning Strategies](#))
- Complete required pre/post assessments, Universal Screeners and Content Mastery Assessments (CMA) according to district guidance.
- Provide a range of practice opportunities for your students.

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- Use [Canvas Mastery Paths](#) to differentiate student assignments when appropriate.
- Mirror Canvas and Infinite Campus gradebook settings so that you can use the Grade Passback feature, if you choose. Follow the RCSS Gradebook Training Series shared this fall.
- Use compassion over compliance and give grace as needed.
- REMINDER: Your Infinite Campus Gradebook is your official RCSS student grading record.

Student and Teacher Attendance for Learn@Home

- F2F students working in the Learn@Home environment will be counted present based on assignment completion and student/teacher interactions during the Learn@Home period of time. Follow the RCSS Attendance Protocol as related to student absences after the remote learning period.
- Attendance should be updated in Infinite Campus at the end of the Learn@Home period.
- Follow-up with students and contact parents if the student is not completing work, participating in synchronous support sessions, or answering emails.
- Teachers should prepare a two-week unit of unpublished assignments to be used as Emergency Lessons (length of a 14-day quarantine).
- Teachers should follow school-based protocols for reporting their own absences. If scheduled to provide synchronous support that day, the teacher will notify the class and reschedule the synchronous support session another day. Substitute teachers will not be used for Learn@Home instruction.
- REMINDER: Your Infinite Campus Attendance is your official RCSS student attendance record.

Student Behavior for Learn@Home

- Be positive and flexible with students.
- Monitor student behavior and make parent contact if a student misbehaves.
- Show students how to use the virtual tools to raise their hands and to agree or disagree.
- Review Discussion post etiquette with your students.
- View this video to learn more about [Managing Behavior in a Virtual Environment](#).
- Follow the RCSS Online Learning Expectations. (See Appendix A)

Instructional Software Requests

Is there a particular software or instructional program that you would like to see added to the RCSS instructional resources? If so, we want to hear from you! Not sure what is available? [Click here](#) to access a list of our electronic resources. Please talk to your school's Instructional Specialist about products you would like to see added. We may already have a tool that does the same task. For example, there is no need to integrate Remind when Canvas has the same features in Announcements.



[Click Here](#) to submit your requests for additional products (click Software Request Form).

TIPS FOR STARTING LEARN@HOME

Things to Do Before the First Week of Learn@Home Instruction

- Contact all students to introduce yourself, if you have not already done so.
 - Be sure they understand their new learning environment.
 - Remind your students to check their technology.
 - Be sure they have their usernames and passwords.
 - Be sure students know how to download offline content [Canvas Offline](#)
 - Show your students [How to Access Canvas video](#)
 - Share parent information and student [Canvas Orientation videos](#)
 - Assist parents with the ["pairing" process](#) so they can monitor their child's work in Canvas.
- Check your technology to ensure that it is working properly.
- Prepare your presentation space.
- Begin personalizing your course with resources, discussions, and activities, if you have not already done so. Canvas Commons is a great resource for your planning.
- Participate in professional learning opportunities. Refer to the [recommended Canvas Training Links](#). You do not have to register in Business Plus.

Things to Do During the First Week of Learn@Home Instruction

- Review the RCSS Online Learning Expectations with your students. (see Appendix A)
- Create a discussion post in Canvas to get your students engaged.
 - Allow your students to respond via text, audio or video.
 - Include discussions post etiquette.
 - Reach out to any student who does not respond before the end of the week.
- Assign the grade specific Canvas orientation module to your students, if needed. You should import this module from Canvas Commons (filter for Richmond County Schools).
- Review your content [Curriculum Map](#) and provide corresponding instruction.
- Continue to personalize your course with resources, discussions and activities. Canvas Commons is a great resource for your planning.

[Access this link for more ideas on best practices for online learning.](#)

Need Help? Contact your Instructional Specialist for Canvas support and training.





RCSS Digital Instructional Expectations for F2F Teachers

Best Practices and Expectations for Other Support Staff During Learn@Home Periods

Administrators

- Communicate weekly with parents via Infinite Campus Shout Point
 - An initial message and letter should be sent to parents
 - Ensure weekly updates are communicated to parents via school website/social media page(s), global connect, etc.
- Communicate with staff via email, Canvas, and Teams or Zoom virtual tools
 - Updates, changes, etc. should be communicated to staff
- Create a schedule for front office coverage
 - Ensure the front office is open and phones are answered during school hours each day
 - Note: Calls may be transferred to principal's phone if a schedule is not necessary/doesn't permit based on staff affected by positive COVID-19 test results
 - Support staff may be utilized if necessary or available
- Create a daily Admin Flex Schedule (includes principal and assistant principal)
 - Ensure at least one administrator is present on campus during school hours
 - Complete daily administrative tasks so there is no interruption in daily operations or regular school business
- Create a schedule to observe online and F2F teachers' synchronous sessions (F2F teachers must make their virtual sessions available).

Counselors

- Counselors may request invitations to teachers' synchronous classes for a weekly check-in
- Counselors should have classroom guidance lessons and resources posted, possibly to include video lessons of the counselors themselves (see [sample video](#))
- Counselors can fulfill records requests through the online records management tool, ScribOrder and/or they may elect to come to their building 1-2 times per week to fulfill physical records requests that come via fax
- Counselors should continue to participate in Mental Health Team and Attendance Review Team Meetings virtually (through Teams)
- Counselors can prepare Monique Burr Lessons presentations/work on future guidance lessons
- Depending on students' technology, counselors can schedule individual Teams meetings with students with parents present
- Monitor and address any Tip Line/Sprigeo info requests/complaints

Instructional Specialists

- Instructional Specialists will attend weekly instructional support team meetings with Teaching and Learning on Mondays
- Instructional Specialists will create a rotation schedule to visit virtual classes to observe teachers and provide co-teaching support, as needed or requested, on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays
*** (Providing intensive support to induction/waiver teachers, if needed) ***
- Instructional Specialists will attend collaborative planning and/or provide PL for teachers on Fridays



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Media Specialists

- Update the Media Handbook
- Work on the school/media website
- Gather resources to share with teachers
- Create a summer reading list
- Develop and plan reading programs
- Clean up Destiny records
- Pull circulation data and create a plan to improve
- Create promotional flyers
- Create a wish list of books for future purchase
- Build library lessons (in Canvas if you have been trained)
- Provide office hours for teachers to check in if they have questions
- If allowed to enter the building, change displays and organize materials

General Education Paraprofessionals

- Assist with attendance (ex: calling parents during sessions to get kids logged on)
- Behavior management during synchronous sessions
- Conduct small group lessons with students in breakout sessions
- Provide technology support and assist with entering technology work order tickets as needed
- Attend school/district PL related to supporting online instruction
- Communicate with parents about completing assessments or progress monitoring lessons
- Assist with grading assignments
- Assist with creating materials and resources for students without devices

ACE Teachers

- Follow outlined responsibilities of general education teachers
- Schedule synchronous lessons with F2F students; record direct instruction to provide additional supports for students who are unable to participate in synchronous sessions
- Provide F2F students with asynchronous assignments on Canvas utilizing the ACE Resources
- Prepare project-based packets based on the ACE thematic units of study to support students who do not have access to technology
- Schedule AM and PM virtual office hours for students who have questions or need extra assistance
- Schedule virtual collaboration time with general education teachers who need support with instructional planning

ESOL Teachers

- Follow outlined responsibilities of general education teachers
- Schedule virtual lessons with F2F students
- Provide F2F students with asynchronous assignments on Canvas or take-home packets
- Schedule virtual office hours for students who have questions or need extra assistance
- Upload EL documents into Infinite Campus



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SPED Teachers

- Follow outlined responsibilities of general education teachers
- Conduct IEP meetings for students on assigned caseload
- Review, update and develop (as necessary) Online Learning Plans (OLPs) for virtual students
- Monitor AR/ER end dates and schedule/send notifications for meetings a month in advance of end dates
- Contact (via telephone, email, text and/or virtually) parents of students on your caseload a minimum of two times per week, offer consultative parent training and document attempts in GO contact log
- Utilize breakout rooms in Teams to conduct small group sessions with students in deficit areas
- Organize data collection

Special Education Paraprofessionals

- Support SPED teacher(s) with all assigned tasks
- Maintain regular communication with all teachers you support
- Assist with data collection
- Provide and/or guide small group and individualized instruction under the direction of a teacher in breakout rooms

EIP Augmented Teachers

- Follow outlined responsibilities of general education teachers
- Collaborate with the General Education (GE) teacher to determine the best way to support students in a co-teaching model; Determine if the EIP teacher will deliver instruction by: (1) signing on during the GE's virtual session utilizing breakout rooms, (2) teach collaboratively with the GE **OR** (3) set up his/her own synchronous session
- Establish daily collaboration time for the EIP and GE teacher to discuss students' progress, challenges, and next steps and determine which standards/objectives will be covered
- Collaborate with the GE to prepare *Instructional Work Packets* **AND** *Grab and Go Manipulative Kits* to support assigned tasks in reading and math (blocks, letters, highlighters, crayons, scissors, rulers, pencils, books, PDFs of stories, sentence stems, etc.)
- Provide recordings of direct instruction lessons that may be shared with students and parents

Specials Teachers

- Follow outlined responsibilities of general education teachers
- Update webpage and post relevant "extra-curricular lessons" that parents can incorporate at home
- Create and share assignments with the homeroom teachers
- Upload a video lesson each week and share with the homeroom teacher (Example: A physical education teacher may demonstrate via video or post a video of someone doing three-five exercises for students to do at home, such as burpees, jumping jacks, or lunges)
- Post a monthly newsletter that includes historical facts about the content area and highlights famous people associated with that content area
- Create a weekly/monthly "CHOICE" board for the students to complete (This should be school-based as each school has a different number/level of specials)



APPENDIX: A

Online Learning Classroom Expectations for RCSS Families

Dear RCSS students and families,

The Richmond County School System would like to provide a list of expectations for online learning classroom behavior. To ensure a positive, productive and enjoyable learning experience for all participants, it is important that all students and caregivers adhere to the typical code of conduct and dress code for in-person educational activity while participating in online learning. All students should be courteous and respectful. Students are responsible for the same expectations in online class as in person.

Please read the bullets below regarding conduct in the online learning environment. For a complete list of behavioral expectations, please consult your student handbook. Click [this link](#) to access an electronic edition of your student Code of Conduct.

Online Learning Classroom Expectations for Students and Parents/Guardians

Behavioral Expectations for Students

- All school rules, regulations and conduct should be followed while in the online learning environment. All laws must also be followed.
- Students should always be respectful and courteous to authority, including teachers and administrators. They should not disrupt or distract the class and should not interfere with the teacher's ability to instruct the class in any way.
- Students should also be respectful and courteous to other students. Inappropriate, offensive, discriminatory or threatening comments and/or disruptive behavior by any participants during Canvas/Microsoft Teams online class sessions will not be tolerated.
- Login credentials must not be shared. Sharing of login information violates other students' and teachers' rights to confidentiality and could allow class participation by unauthorized persons and/or lead to disruptive behaviors that detract from a productive and positive learning environment.
- Students should not misrepresent or falsify their identity. Nor should they refuse to identify themselves to their teacher.
- There should be no other onlookers that are not part of the class. Non-students should not login to a Canvas or Microsoft Teams Meeting without authorization. Students should not share classroom links. Other family members or non-students should not be visible, by webcam, during virtual class.
- While engaged in online classroom activities, students should not allow anything other than their face and their voice (at appropriate times) to be seen or heard in the Canvas or Microsoft Teams Meeting.
- It is typical online meeting courtesy to remain muted unless called upon by the teacher to speak (then the student should unmute).
- It is best for students to have a work station for online learning that is free from distractions and noises. However, muting while in online class gatherings, prevents unexpected distractions (crying baby, barking dog, music or TV) from distracting the entire class. There also should never be visual distractions visible in the background behind students.
- The best background for a virtual classroom is a solid color wall. We encourage students to use the background features in Microsoft Teams. The goal is to minimize distractions for other students. Things



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that would not be allowed in school should not be visible on camera such as weapons, offensive signage or artwork, alcoholic beverage bottles or other prohibited substances.

- The virtual environment should resemble the in-person environment as much as possible. Students should not have a virtual “show and tell” with toys, pets and any other item that would not be permitted in class.
- Showing pornography, exhibiting lewd behavior or making lewd comments is not permitted in the virtual classroom environment or in person. Such activity violates the code of conduct and will result in disciplinary action. Such behavior could also result in legal implications.
- Typical classroom dress code should be followed at all times and students should sit in an upright position similar to their posture in a school setting.
- Obscene, vulgar or discriminatory language is not permissible and students may not speak to students or teachers in a demeaning or derogatory manner.
- *Students who do not log in to Canvas on a regular basis and participate in required synchronous sessions on a regular basis after multiple reminders from the school will be scheduled to return to the Face-to-Face (in-person) environment.*

Privacy Guidelines for Parents/Guardians

To maintain a positive, productive learning environment and assure confidentiality for students and teachers during online learning, all parents/guardians are asked to follow these privacy guidelines.

- Canvas/Microsoft Teams live lessons are designed for students. To prevent disruptions to the learning environment, parents/guardians should not actively participate in the live instructional sessions, although parents/guardians may assist their child with technology and/or remain nearby.
- Do not video record, audio record, photograph, live stream, or transmit in any other way any part of a Canvas/Microsoft Teams live virtual session and do not share on social media.
- Any confidential or personally identifiable information related to students participating in Canvas/Microsoft Teams online sessions should not be collected, discussed or shared. The Family Education Right to Privacy Act (FERPA) applies and should be followed with fidelity.
- Parents/guardians should not engage with students during Canvas/Microsoft Teams online sessions. If you need to speak with your child during a live session, first mute your child’s microphone.
- If a parent/guardian has a question, please contact your student’s teacher through email or Canvas rather than interrupting class.

Students, parents and caregivers, we appreciate you. Thank you for your cooperation in helping us ensure a positive and protective virtual learning experience.



Appendix B: Video Conferencing Matrix

Canvas Conferences	Microsoft Teams	Zoom
<p>This tool is integrated into Canvas and allows teachers to provide synchronous, real-time instruction without leaving Canvas. This feature is powered by Big Blue Button. This tool is great for teachers looking for simplicity, especially for early learners. It is the only fully integrated conferencing tool. Canvas calendar Appointment Group is a great tool for scheduling synchronous tutoring or small group instruction because it allows the teacher to set available hours and students can sign-up for a time slot within Canvas. The scheduled session will appear on both the teacher’s and student’s Canvas calendars. The scheduling feature is a plus.</p>	<p>Since every student and teacher in the system has an Office 365 account, Teams is the preferred choice for your teachers who are comfortable with the Microsoft Suite. Using Teams allows your students to easily integrate all of the Microsoft products in one place. We highly recommend Teams for the teachers who will use OneNote, PowerPoint, Excel, SharePoint, OneDrive, etc. Another advantage of Teams is that your students are already rostered; when they log in to Teams, they do not need to create an account.</p>	<p>As a school system, we do not provide technical support or PL for Zoom, but we do understand that some teachers are more comfortable using Zoom. We leave that up to you as a building-level leader. In this environment with so much “new learning,” teacher comfort level is important.</p>
<p>Downside: Big Blue Button has been known to experience downtime when the system is extremely busy.</p>	<p>Downside: Teachers using Teams must place the link on their Canvas homepage. No matter how your teacher links Teams to their course, it is still a link that will take the students outside of Canvas and requires the students and teachers to be a bit more tech savvy.</p>	<p>Downside: Students are not rostered, so they will need to create an account. If they choose a nickname username, the teacher will need to know the username to identify the student. For example, if my username is Dreamer101, my teacher will need to know that is me. This can be avoided with clear directions from the teachers on the front end. The teachers and students will not receive RCSS technical support for resolving issues. Zoom is not a secure conferencing tool. There is a time limit with the free account. Like Teams, no matter how your teacher links Zoom to their course, it is still a link that will take the students outside of Canvas and requires students and teachers to be a bit more tech savvy.</p>