



CASE STUDY

# Remote Learning in an Urban District

How Baltimore City Public Schools delivered custom curriculum to 80,000 students—under dynamic circumstances



# Executive Summary

When COVID-19 forced Baltimore City Public Schools to close schools, leaders had to address a challenge common to large, urban districts across the country—staying engaged with, and continuing to provide instruction to, thousands of students who didn't have access to the internet or personal technology devices. Given the high-stakes and dynamic circumstances, BCPS leadership needed a partner that could reliably print and deliver thousands of instructional materials to 18 drop-off centers each week while remaining responsive to changing demands. The district found that partner in XanEdu.

## Baltimore City Public Schools

Baltimore City Public Schools (BCPS) is one of the 50 largest school districts in the country, serving a diverse population of nearly 80,000 students from pre-K to grade 12 at 161 schools across the city of Baltimore. The district strives to achieve excellence for all students by focusing on quality instruction and maintaining a culture of excellence.

## About XanEdu

XanEdu's K-12 CustomBook Solutions help you make education personalized and affordable by giving you control to create unique materials based on your specific students' needs. XanEdu's expertise in copyright clearance, design, production and distribution enables curriculum creators to take back control of the content, quality and costs of instructional materials.

**"Finding a reliable partner that got the materials where they needed to be on time removed a major source of stress during a very stressful time."**

*– Kasey Mengel, Special Assistant to the Chief Academic Officer at BCPS*

## Best Practice 1

# You Don't Need to "Go It Alone"

# 1

Serving 80,000 students living in Baltimore, BCPS faces many of the challenges faced by other urban districts, not the least of which is staying engaged with a student population that includes students who may be chronically absent, highly mobile, homeless or lack reliable internet access. With the prospect of not seeing students for months as a result of COVID-19 school closures in the spring, the team at BCPS knew they had to mobilize immediately if they were to ensure the continuity of learning of, and maintain relationships with, their students.

The day schools closed for the pandemic, BCPS district and school staff started printing materials to send to their students. Their goal was to ensure that there was no gap between the closure of schools and the first day of remote instruction. Despite the best of intentions, the effort ran into challenges almost immediately: there was a lack of consistency around which materials were printed and packaged for students and then schools ran out of ink and paper. Knowing that they needed a systemic solution that ensured that high quality content would reach students each week, the district explored working with existing print vendors before selecting XanEdu as its partner.

## Best Practice 2

# Identify a Print Partner That Is Reliable

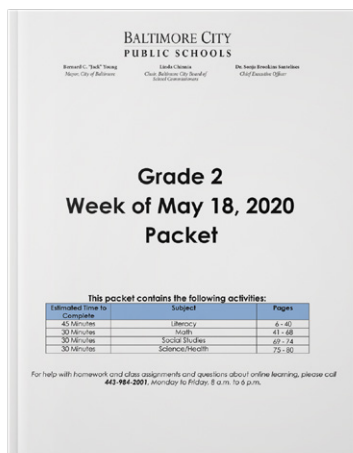
# 2

BCPS opened 18 emergency distribution sites where families could go to pick up packets of learning materials along with daily meals. Site logistics were a challenge that required managing district personnel, volunteers, learning materials distribution, and other support services to students and their families. A critical aspect of this work was having the printed learning packets delivered on time so they could be distributed to the students as soon as they arrived.

"There was so much happening at the distribution centers, it was critical that we find a reliable partner who could deliver the proper materials to each center within the specific windows of time when staff were present," said Kasey Mengel, Special Assistant to the Chief Academic Officer at BCPS.

The district's initial print partners struggled to meet the district's needs with multiple sites not receiving learning packets during the first two weeks of school closures. The district then turned to XanEdu who put systems in place, worked with frontline staff at each distribution site and expedited shipping at no additional cost to ensure that the print packets arrived where they needed to be when they needed to be there.

"During the first two weeks, we didn't have printed materials at some sites. At other sites, the deliveries were late. This was obviously bad for students, but it also made it impossible for the district to track and manage our resources," Mengel explained. "Finding a reliable partner that got the materials where they needed to be on time removed a major source of stress during a very stressful time."



## Best Practice 3

# Customer Service Matters

# 3

As everyone scrambled to adjust to the new world of extended remote learning, it was inevitable that mistakes would be made. Identifying a print partner with a focus on customer service is critical to make sure that small mix-ups did not grow into major calamities.

"XanEdu's customer service was out of this world!" said Mengel. "They went above and beyond to make sure that any issues that did come up were addressed immediately."

Continued...

While every company says they value customer support, look for partners that have made customer service a key feature of their solution and not just a selling point in a pitch.

“XanEdu just had a customer service mindset,” said Mengel. “While it was useful to have a partner, like XanEdu, with education experience for this work, the thing I valued most about our work with them was that they were open to listening to us.”

This is why, in thanking XanEdu for their work with BCPS, Chief of Schools John Davice praised “the quality of materials, timely delivery and expert customer support” that made the transition “into remote learning smoother for staff, students, and families.”

As BCPS heads into a new school year that brings with it more remote learning, Mengel and the team at BCPS are engaging XanEdu as a thought partner to support and complement the district’s digital learning model to ensure that every student has the materials they need to be successful.

## Learn More

Find out how XanEdu can help you implement affordable, high-quality custom resources for your unique K-12 classrooms. Visit [www.xanedu.com/k-12](http://www.xanedu.com/k-12) to learn more.

BALTIMORE CITY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Bernard C. “Jack” Young  
Mayor, City of Baltimore

Linda Chinai  
Chair, Baltimore City Board of  
School Commissioners

Dr. Sonia Brookes Sandites  
Chief Executive Officer

### 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Packet

Week of April 27, 2020

This packet contains the following activities:

Estimated Time to Complete	Subject	Pages
360 Minutes	English I	5 - 25
180 Minutes	Social Studies – US History	26 - 31
90 Minutes	Science – Biology	32 - 36

If you have additional questions about homework, class assignments, online learning, or need support accessing tools, please call the help desk at 443-984-2001, Monday to Friday, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.

*Student packets should be returned to school upon return.*

200 East North Avenue • Baltimore, Maryland 21202 • [www.baltimorecityschools.org](http://www.baltimorecityschools.org)

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### 11<sup>th</sup> Grade Packet

Week of June 8, 2020

This packet contains the following activities:

Estimated Time to Complete	Subject	Pages
225 Minutes	English III	5 - 24
90 Minutes	Social Studies – Modern World History	25 - 29
90 Minutes	Science – Physics	30 - 33

If you have additional questions about homework, class assignments, online learning, or need support accessing tools, please call the help desk at 443-984-2001, Monday to Friday, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.

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