Frederick County Public Schools’ Plan

for

Reopening and Advancing Forward

July 8, 2020

1st Revision- July 29, 2020

2nd Revision- August 12, 2020

3rd Revision- September 16, 2020 (Revisions are notated in blue font.)
Board of Education of Frederick County

2020

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Executive Summary

Preparation for the 2020/2021 school year, in the midst of an unprecedented public health challenge, required stakeholders across Frederick County Public Schools to join forces to outline a plan for the safe reopening of schools and resumption of service to students. Using “Maryland Together: Maryland’s Recovery Plan for Education” as a guide, senior staff developed principles to serve as touchstones for future decision-making. These principles acknowledge the agility required by challenging circumstances, a state of doing business that has been a hallmark of the ever-changing conditions presented by COVID-19.

These Guiding Decision-Making Principles, rooted in the spirit of FCPS’s goals and Strategic Plan, are:

- Prioritize the safety and health of students, employees and families.
- Make all decisions through an equity lens.
- Provide high-quality instruction and maximize face-to-face interaction to the greatest extent possible.
- Support the social-emotional well-being of students and staff.
- Communicate concisely, accurately, and frequently.
- Engage stakeholders in the decision-making process as appropriate.
- Deploy resources strategically while adapting to ever-changing conditions and requirements.
- Return to full operational status as quickly as possible when safe health conditions exist.

Recognizing the complexity of planning for recovery and reopening schools, Superintendent Dr. Theresa Alban established a diverse and knowledgeable field of professionals from across the organization to serve on work groups reporting directly to the superintendent’s Cabinet. Of particular importance was the representation of teachers, administrators, and education support professional employees as members of these work groups. Each work group immediately began meeting and focused on reviewing the individual processes, procedures, and requirements outlined in its particular charge in light of the principles set forth. As the work groups began drafting initial plans, the Public Affairs department solicited real-time feedback from a parent advisory group. The parent advisory group was composed of representatives from existing Board of Education advisory committees and the PTA Council of Frederick County.

Work groups were focused on strategic components of the reopening plan, in order to maximize skills, experience, and flexible thinking of the members. The Logistics Work Group focused on operational procedures necessary to safely manage the physical spaces of the school buildings, the health, safety, and cleaning protocols, and the transportation arrangements required to facilitate a reopening under various unique conditions. The Instructional Work Group was tasked with creating consistent and instructionally-sound options for equitable student course schedules and groupings, instructional staffing, professional learning, and virtual education options. The Special Services and Student Supports Work Group addressed the social-emotional well-being of all students, while also determining procedures necessary to ensure
additional support for students with diverse learning needs, such as those who receive special services. The Employee Relations and Communications Work Group grappled with questions surrounding non-traditional operational processes, support and resources for employees, and strategies for effective communication with staff.

During the month of June 2020, each work group met both as a whole and in subgroups working on individual tasks. Cabinet advisors kept senior leaders informed of the work groups’ progress and ensured that the groups had the latest guidance and access to the most current information. The Plan presented here is reflective of the significant hours, research, and collective wisdom and insight of the many stakeholders who focused on possibilities in the face of uncertainty, promise in the face of peril, and breakthroughs rather than barriers in order to serve the students of Frederick County Public Schools.

Reopening and Advancing Forward Work Group Members

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Logistics Work Group</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Name</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bob Wilkinson, Work Group Chair</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paul Lebo, Cabinet-Level Adviser</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scott Blundell</td>
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<tr>
<td>Heather Clabaugh</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wanda Ford</td>
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<td>Eddie Hargreaves</td>
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<td>Greg Keller</td>
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<td>Bob Kelly</td>
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<td>Kevin Kendro</td>
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<td>Curtis Orndorff</td>
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<td>Larry Phillips</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mark Pritts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fred Punturiero</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shane Ryberg</td>
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<tr>
<td>Christine Samuels</td>
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### Logistics Work Group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Curtis Scott</td>
<td>Sr. Manager- Employee Relations/Contract Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jessica Sichert</td>
<td>Accountant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rachel Sorenson</td>
<td>ELL Teacher- Tuscarora ES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bruce Taylor</td>
<td>FASSE Representative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stephanie Ware</td>
<td>FCASA Representative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jen Waters</td>
<td>Health Services Specialist</td>
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<tr>
<td>Zelda Tribit</td>
<td>Administrative Support</td>
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### Instructional Work Group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Work Group Chair- Dan Lippy</td>
<td>Director- School Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cabinet-Level Adviser- Kevin Cuppett</td>
<td>Executive Director- CII</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colleen Bernard</td>
<td>Curriculum Specialist- 6-12 Social Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charles Berry</td>
<td>Music Teacher- Deer Crossing ES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kristen Canning</td>
<td>Principal- Ballenger Creek ES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jessica Clabaugh</td>
<td>Budget Analyst</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amy Cordes</td>
<td>Achievement Specialist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ellen Georgi</td>
<td>Social Studies Teacher- Walkersville MS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chris Horne</td>
<td>Curriculum Specialist- PreK-5 Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gina Keefer</td>
<td>Sr. Manager- Talent Acquisition/Management Certificated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tracey Kibler</td>
<td>Principal- Gov. Thomas Johnson HS</td>
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### Instructional Work Group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Karl Kidd</td>
<td>Advanced Academics Teacher- Sugarloaf ES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FCTA Representative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debbie Langowski</td>
<td>FASSE Representative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meg Lee</td>
<td>Director- Organizational Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kimm Mazaleski</td>
<td>Principal- Tuscarora ES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bill Meekins</td>
<td>Purchasing Agent III</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dian Nelson</td>
<td>Coordinator- Communications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dan Noble</td>
<td>Systems Engineer I</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lorcan OhEithir</td>
<td>FCASA Representative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laura Olsen</td>
<td>Manager- Environmental Compliance &amp; Occupational Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linda Raines</td>
<td>Administrative Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jessica Reinhard</td>
<td>Supervisor- Advanced Academics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jennifer A. Reynolds</td>
<td>English Teacher- Brunswick HS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FCTA Representative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary Jo Richmond</td>
<td>Supervisor- PreK-12 Media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kathleen Schlappal</td>
<td>Director- School Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amy Schwiegerath</td>
<td>FCASA Representative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George Seaton</td>
<td>Director- CII</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michelle Shearer</td>
<td>Project Manager- HS Innovation &amp; Transformation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mike Shesman</td>
<td>Teacher Specialist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeannette Thompson</td>
<td>Manager- Transportation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frank Vetter</td>
<td>Principal- Walkersville MS</td>
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### Special Services and Student Supports Work Group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Work Group Co-Chair- Linda Chambers</td>
<td>Director- Special Education Compliance &amp; Student Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Services and Student Supports Work Group</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work Group Co-Chair- Dana Falls</td>
<td>Director- Student Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cabinet- Level-Adviser- Keith Harris</td>
<td>Executive Director- AAE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gary Barkdoll</td>
<td>Manager- Maintenance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amanda Baugher</td>
<td>Manager- Accounting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jennifer Bingman</td>
<td>Director- System Accountability &amp; School Improvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angie Corrigan</td>
<td>Coordinator- System Accountability &amp; School Improvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael Dillman</td>
<td>Principal- Brunswick HS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rachel Eversole</td>
<td>Coordinator- Behavioral Intervention &amp; Supports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Max Fletcher</td>
<td>Assistant Principal- Ballenger Creek ES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tracy Frank</td>
<td>Coordinator- Special Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amanda Furajter</td>
<td>FCASA Representative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kathy Gull</td>
<td>Coordinator- EL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maritza Figueroa-Mangene</td>
<td>EL Teacher- Lincoln ES FCTA Representative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ann McGreevy</td>
<td>Supervisor- Mental Health &amp; Psychological Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kim Miskell</td>
<td>Assistant Manager- Purchasing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrea Morgan</td>
<td>Administrative Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debbie Myers</td>
<td>Curriculum Specialist- PreK-5 Math</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ed O’Hara</td>
<td>Manager- Transportation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eric Louers -Phillips</td>
<td>Supervisor- Equity/Cultural Proficiency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amy Boehman-Pollitt</td>
<td>Special Education Teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Janet Shipman</td>
<td>Supervisor- Behavioral Health &amp; Student Services</td>
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</table>
## Special Services and Student Supports Work Group

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Karren Sowell</td>
<td>FASSE Representative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tonya Street</td>
<td>Coordinator- Public Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tim Thonrburg</td>
<td>Director II- Human Resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joshua Work</td>
<td>Assistant Principal- Monocacy MS</td>
</tr>
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## Employee Relations and Communications Work Group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Work Group Co-Chair-Donna Clabaugh</td>
<td>Sr. Manager- Employee Benefits/Wellness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work Group Co-Chair- Tiana Haile</td>
<td>Coordinator- Community Engagement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cabinet Level Adviser- Jamie Cannon</td>
<td>Chief of Staff &amp; Legal Counsel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeneen Beck</td>
<td>Achievement Specialist for School Culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daryl Boffman</td>
<td>Executive Director- Public Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharon Eburg</td>
<td>FASSE Representative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denise Flora</td>
<td>Supervisor- Compliance &amp; 504</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deb Huffman</td>
<td>Coordinator- Use of Facilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Janet Ingram</td>
<td>Executive Secretary- CII</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kerrie Koopman</td>
<td>Manager- Purchasing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrew Macluskie</td>
<td>FCTA &amp; MSEA Representative</td>
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### Employee Relations and Communications Work Group

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<th>Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sabrina Nail</td>
<td>Ombuds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhonda Phillips</td>
<td>Assistant Manager - Accounting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Danny Rumpf</td>
<td>FCASA Representative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tom Saunders</td>
<td>Instructional Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allie Watkins</td>
<td>Principal - Waverely ES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rob Wedge</td>
<td>Sr. Manager - Talent Acquisition/Management Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faye Zimmerman</td>
<td>Administrative Support</td>
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### Parent Advisory Group

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Work Group Co-Chair- Mike Franklin</td>
<td>FCPS 2019 Teacher of the Year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work Group Co-Chair- Donna Quatman-Wilder</td>
<td>Teacher Specialist, Public Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cabinet-Level Adviser- Daryl Boffman</td>
<td>Executive Director of Public Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ivania Amador</td>
<td>Parent, Racial Equity Committee Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elissa Andrade</td>
<td>Parent, Racial Equity Committee Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dana Barlow</td>
<td>Parent, Calendar Committee Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent Advisory Group</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kyle Bostian</td>
<td>Parent, PTA Council Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lissette Colon</td>
<td>Parent, Family Involvement (FITT)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michelle Concepcion</td>
<td>Director of Special Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charisse Diggins</td>
<td>Parent, Racial Equity Committee Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tia Dowdell</td>
<td>Parent, Racial Equity Committee Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kate Erickson</td>
<td>Parent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tiffany Green</td>
<td>Parent, Family Involvement Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dana Nardone</td>
<td>Parent, Calendar Committee Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heidi Quick</td>
<td>Parent, Calendar Committee Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traci Tatum</td>
<td>President of PTA Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jennifer Wheat</td>
<td>Parent, Special Education Citizens Advisory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Committee Member</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week of April 20</td>
<td>Innovation Teams began to convene</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 30</td>
<td>Plan development began in Superintendent’s Cabinet</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 18-May 29</td>
<td>Innovation Teams reported to ACTS leadership</td>
</tr>
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| May 29          | Four system work groups are formed:  
|                 | · Employee Relations and Communication  
|                 | · Instructional  
|                 | · Logistics  
|                 | · Special Services and Student Supports |
| May 29-ongoing  | Work group meetings (and subcommittee meetings) are held |
| June            | Parent Advisory Group regarding reopening was formed. |
| June 11         | Structured feedback gathered from students |
| June 11-ongoing | Work groups report back to Cabinet on progress |
| June 15         | Parent survey on reopening disseminated |
| July 8          | Reopening plan update to the Board of Education of Frederick County (BOE) |
| July            | Opportunity for community feedback |
| July            | Public Release of the Plan |
| July 29         | Final Report presented to Board of Education |
Maryland State Department of Education Guidance

“Maryland Together: Maryland’s Recovery Plan for Education” established requirements for local school systems as they work to develop their plans for the 2020/2021 school year. These requirements include:

**Requirement #1:**
Local school systems must have their recovery plans completed and posted to their website by August 14, 2020. The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) will review all local recovery plans to ensure that the plans include and address all requirements for opening schools.

**Requirement #2:**
The local school system’s equity plan must be reflected throughout the local recovery plan.

**Requirement #3:**
Local school systems must establish a recovery plan stakeholder group that is representative of their schools and community.

**Requirement #4:**
Early in the school year, schools must determine where their students are instructionally, identify the gaps in learning and prepare a path for instructional success and recovery.

**Requirement #5:**
All local school systems must ensure that Maryland College and Career Ready Standards, pre-kindergarten through grade 12, are taught in all content areas and the state frameworks are followed for each content.

**Requirement #6:**
Local school systems must follow the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (Section 504), and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

**Requirement #7:**
Local school systems must follow procedures that are developed by the MSDE in collaboration with the Maryland Department of Health and Guidance from the CDC for an individual who tests positive for COVID-19.

**Requirement #8:**
Local school systems must follow safety protocols for collection of materials, cleaning of schools and other facilities, daily cleaning, and nutrition as established by MSDE in collaboration with the Maryland Department of Health and the CDC guidance.
Requirement #9:
Local school systems must follow protocols for the safe transportation of students to and from school.

Requirement #10:
Local school systems must develop a system for tracking attendance when students are engaged in virtual learning.

Requirement #11:
Each local school system must develop its own plan for communication.

Requirement #12:
The COVID-19 Checklist must be utilized in the development of the recovery plan.

Requirement #13:
The Maryland Public Secondary School Athletic Association (MPSSAA) Roadmap forwarded for interscholastic athletics and activities must align with the MSDE and the LSS Educational and Health and Safety decisions in order for education-based athletics and activities to resume during Stage One and Stage Two of the Governor’s Maryland Strong: Roadmap to Recovery.
Lessons Learned from Key Stakeholders

FCPS collected a wealth of data from key stakeholders throughout the closure and continuing throughout reopening planning.

April 24, 2020 – May 8, 2020: FCPS COL Survey completed by Parents/Guardians/Teachers

June 11, 2020: FCPS System-Wide Student Reflection Day

June 12-17, 2020: COL Reflection for Staff

June 12-17, 2020: Virtual Learning Self-Assessment completed by Teachers

June 15, 2020: Next School Year Parent Inventory

July 15-23, 2020: Parent Feedback on Reopening and Advancing Forward

July 15-23, 2020: Staff Feedback on Reopening and Advancing Forward

July 30-August 6, 2020: FCPS Student Registration Intention Form

High level learnings were established in analyzing both the quantitative and qualitative data collected. From the Spring Continuity of Learning Survey, FCPS learned the following:

- Parents wanted teachers to use virtual conferencing and/or more video chats and teachers agreed that they wanted this option.
- Parents were extremely appreciative of schools and teachers during this time.
- The time period was stressful for families and there were many contributing factors, not necessarily the fault of FCPS.
- Organization and timely announcement of work/assignments is important to families.
- Teacher feedback beyond a grade is essential to student learning.
- Teachers need to have more consistent virtual office hours.
- Parents want one consistent platform/method to be used.
- Virtual learning can be difficult and overwhelming for students with disabilities and their families.
- Teachers were concerned that not all students were fully participating or engaged.
- Some teachers were prepared to use technology while others required more training.

The staff and student reflection surveys helped FCPS to learn additional information:

- Some students enjoyed the flexibility of virtual learning, learning at their own time and pace.
- Some students struggled greatly with virtual learning and needed more teacher support.
- Students enjoyed virtual opportunities to engage with the teacher and their fellow peers.
- Many students wanted to learn new material and receive more timely feedback from their teachers.
- Staff sought accountability and traditional grading in the future for virtual learning.
- Synchronous instruction needs to be more frequent.
- Staff need more professional learning, time to explore online resources, etc.
- Staff need communication to be streamlined and in a timely manner.
- More training is needed for staff, parents, and students on the use of Schoology.

In the early stages of re-opening planning, FCPS learned from the parent inventory, with 20,319 parent responses for individual students, there was a 45% response rate that an all face-to-face model in the fall was preferred, 31% response rate for a preferred hybrid model, and 24% response rate for an all virtual option. The highest response rate for a second preference was a hybrid model with a 64% response rate.

To respond to staff requests for additional training, a self-assessment was conducted to assist them in targeting 26 hours of flexible professional learning time at the end of the year and into the summer months, per their preference. This was an important initial step in addressing this gap. Finally, family and staff reopening feedback surveys are live and open for input at the time of this revision. These data will be shared with our Board of Education on July 29, 2020 and will be added to the plan prior to its final posting on August 14, 2020.
Instructional Models

Face-to-face opportunities will convene based on the FCPS Reopening Plan, which considers guidance from the “Maryland Together: Maryland’s Recovery Plan for Education COVID-19 Response and The Path Forward” and guidance from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) on Reopening Schools.

FCPS is actively planning for three possible scenarios to start the 2020/2021 school year with a strong emphasis on flexibility and fluidity given the ever-changing nature of the conditions related to COVID-19. Consistent with the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) plan, FCPS has designated three potential stages for reopening the 2020/2021 school year.

- **Stage 3 Green** – Traditional opening of schools with intensified safety and health measures.
- **Stage 2 Yellow** – A hybrid model that incorporates both face-to-face instruction as well as virtual learning.
- **Stage 1 Red** – A full virtual learning model that incorporates some elements from the spring 2020 FCPS Continuity of Learning (COL) Plan with the adoption of improvements that will enhance the overall student learning experience.

FCPS is accustomed to the Stage 3 Green because it closely resembles the traditional start of a school year; however, FCPS leaders will address key areas resulting from this spring’s building closure and COVID-19. These areas include:

- Assessing academic progress as well as potential learning loss.
- Focusing on the social-emotional wellbeing of students.
- Instituting safety and health measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19.
- Intensifying services and supports to address potential learning loss.
- Reestablishing relationships and routines.

FCPS Work Groups invested the majority of their time preparing for the potential of Stage 2 Yellow reopening which necessitated both face-to-face instruction as well as virtual learning. While FCPS staff believes a Stage 3 Green school opening would be optimal, many indicators suggest that schools will open in Stage 2 Yellow or Stage 1 Red. Decisions about Stages will continue to be based on direction from the Governor and State Superintendent of Schools, as well as guidance from the health department.
The FCPS Stage 2 Yellow plan affords students face-to-face instruction two days a week and virtual learning three days a week. It is imperative to note that virtual learning does not equate to seven hours each day of synchronous learning for students. FCPS does not possess the human resource capacity to provide both face-to-face instruction and synchronous instruction five days a week for seven hours.

In Stage 2 Yellow, staff will identify each student’s primary mode of transportation: (a) bus, (b) parent drop off and pick up and (c) walking. This designation is significant in order to determine FCPS capacity to transport students to school given the modified school schedule and bus capacity limitations. FCPS will limit one student per bus seat and require face covering for both employees and students while on buses. School arrival and departure times will be staggered in order to minimize large group gatherings. Buses will be cleaned at the conclusion of each run.

**Student Cohort Assignment.** Students will be assigned to either an “A” or “B” Cohort which will designate the days of the week in which they have face-to-face instruction. The factors below will be used by school staff to determine student placement into cohorts:

- Academic needs
- Course selection
- School-age siblings
- Special student needs
- Student mode of transportation

**Stage 2 Yellow (Hybrid Model)**

Face-to-Face Instruction: School Day

The division of students into two cohorts will allow 50% of students to attend school under social distancing restrictions while the other 50% of students learn at home. This is termed a hybrid model because it combines both face-to-face and virtual learning.

Hybrid Model Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
<th>Sat. – Sun</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cohort A is in school.</td>
<td>Cohort A is in school.</td>
<td>Cohort A and B are in virtual learning.</td>
<td>Cohort A is in virtual learning</td>
<td>Cohort A is in virtual learning</td>
<td>Building Cleaning (if needed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cohort B is in virtual learning.</td>
<td>Cohort B is in virtual learning.</td>
<td>(Building cleaning)</td>
<td>Cohort B is in school</td>
<td>Cohort B is in school</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Time for Building Cleaning.** The health and safety of students and staff are FCPS’ first priority. Schools have been completely cleaned and disinfected and staff will continue to adhere to all necessary safety precautions. School buildings will be cleaned and disinfected each evening, and special emphasis will be placed on frequently-touched surfaces throughout the day. The physical absence of students in the school building on Wednesdays will allow time for custodial teams to thoroughly clean and disinfect in preparation for the second cohort’s arrival on Thursday. The same cleaning and disinfecting will occur Friday evening and over the weekend, if needed.

**Full Virtual Option**

FCPS hopes that school will return to normal operation as soon as possible, recognizing that five days of in-school, face-to-face schooling is generally the most effective option for students. FCPS believes that the Hybrid Model of instruction is the most robust and supportive instructional model for students if social distancing is required.

FCPS recognizes that some students may need a Full Virtual model that facilitates five days of virtual instruction because of health and/or family considerations. FCPS will communicate more information about this model and how families can select it by early August.

It is important to understand that participation in the Full Virtual model will require students to participate in virtual assignments and activities, view videos for learning, submit work for feedback and grading, engage with digital tools and software and attend synchronous sessions via Google Meet. This model will vary across the elementary, middle and high school levels.

Recognizing that many teachers will still have face-to-face responsibilities in the Hybrid Model, the amount of direct, live support teachers can provide to students in the Full Virtual option will be limited. In order to support teachers in virtual instruction, central teams are focusing resources to create a significant number of direct supports for virtual instruction over the summer.
Staffing Models for Full Virtual Students During Hybrid Instruction

Figure 1

Elementary: Share the Virtual Student Load

Share the Load
Full virtual students from a grade level are grouped together and the grade level team shares responsibilities for these students. Teams can then divide the responsibilities for instruction across the team. This is similar to a departmentalized instructional model.

Figure 2

Elementary: Assign a Virtual Specialist

Virtual Specialist
If a large enough number of students select the full virtual model, they can be grouped into a single class and assigned a teacher. This teacher will be responsible for the instruction of this virtual class. However, the grade level team can still work together to support all learners.

Specialists, Special Education, English Learner
Virtual Offering Model Selection. The Instructional Work Group explored two possible Full Virtual Models: (a) a centrally-delivered model and (b) a school-based delivery model. The school-based Full Virtual Model was deemed the best model because it reflects the systemic priority of maintaining school-student connections and building relationships with students. The Full Virtual Model ensures:

- Change is minimized when students transition from virtual learning to face-to-face learning.
- Course options and supports are lensed through the resources and staff at the building level.
- Large-scale reorganization of systemic resources in a very short period of time is not required.
- Relationships are valued.

Currently, staff are designing level-specific structures (schedules, staffing, course offerings, etc.) to support the school-based Full Virtual Model. In addition to a school-based virtual model, FCPS will
continue to expand offerings and target student specific needs for high school students who may benefit from offerings from Frederick County Virtual School (FCVS). This is an opportunity provided in any stage of re-opening.

It is imperative to note that details of the instructional model implementation will be determined throughout the month of July. Principals have workshop sessions scheduled throughout the month to respond to the information and direction provided in the re-opening plan. Significant networking will occur as school leaders create their specific school schedules. Leaders will consider their school staffing allocation, the input they receive from families regarding virtual versus in-person options, and the needs of specific students to appropriately schedule all students.

Instructional Support for Students in the **Hybrid Model**

- Staff will be able to provide general support to students daily (recognizing that they will have responsibilities for face-to-face instruction on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday). General support may include a brief synchronous session to provide instruction or clarification. It may also include engaging with students in Schoology, responding to questions in the platform or via email or phone.
- Synchronous and/or asynchronous instruction and office hours will be available each Wednesday through scheduled Google Meet sessions, email communication, and additional supports such as screencasts and recorded examples.

Instructional Support for Students in the **Virtual Model**

- Staff will be able to provide general support to students daily (recognizing that they will have responsibilities for face-to-face instruction on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday). General support may include a brief synchronous session to provide instruction or clarification. It may also include engaging with students in Schoology, responding to questions in the platform or via email or phone.
- Synchronous and/or asynchronous instruction and office hours will be available each Wednesday through scheduled Google Meet sessions, email communication, and additional supports such as screencasts and recorded examples.
- At the secondary level, students may be assigned to identified virtual sections which will allow teachers to provide synchronous support during each school day at identified times.

**Virtual Learning Support Day (Wednesdays)**

- Affords dedicated time for staff to provide synchronous instruction and support to students.
- Allows time for continued professional learning opportunities to increase proficiency with virtual learning.
- Creates planning time needed to coordinate instruction for all three instructional groupings: (a) face-to-face instruction, (b) cohort virtual instruction, and (c) full virtual instruction.
Comparing Options for School Reopening

As FCPS plans to reopen schools this fall, two options are being offered to families as they decide what is the best educational model for their child. Below is a comparison of the two models. The information provided below is intended to help families make an informed decision. There are comparisons for each level: elementary school, middle school and high school.

FCPS staff has worked hard to increase rigor and accessibility to engaging instruction for students as they participate in online learning opportunities. It is important to emphasize that students participating in the Full Virtual option should expect a more rigorous academic experience than Continuity of Learning in the spring of 2020.

**Elementary School: Hybrid Learning Model vs. Full Virtual Learning Model**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Elementary School Hybrid Learning Model</th>
<th>Elementary School Full Virtual Learning Model</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Learning Expectations</strong></td>
<td>Students will engage in the learning process for two face-to-face days and three virtual learning days. Virtual Learning days will include a combination of synchronous learning, asynchronous learning, assigned tasks and non-screen time activities.</td>
<td>These students would not come to school and all learning would be done at home. Elementary full virtual students will engage in a combination of synchronous learning, asynchronous learning, assigned tasks and non-screen time activities when learning at home. Expectations for time spent engaged in virtual learning will increase as students become comfortable with the digital tools and will vary depending on the age and development level of the students. Virtual teachers will communicate expectations and adjust as appropriate to ensure that students are learning and successfully able to navigate the virtual classroom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Online Learning Mentors</strong></td>
<td>A virtual mentor is available for students on his/her &quot;at home&quot; learning days to provide technical assistance and general support.</td>
<td>A virtual learning mentor will designate office hours to provide technical assistance and general support to students learning virtually.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grading</strong></td>
<td>Grading for in-person and virtual coursework will follow FCPS Regulation 500-06: Grading, Reporting, and Intervention - Elementary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Attendance

**FCPS Regulation 400-98** addresses student attendance.

A student may be defined as “present” by using multiple measures, such as:
- participation/engagement in activities and assignments
- engagement with digital tools such as Schoology, Lexia and Study Island
- in class or virtual meetings via Google Meet with a teacher or service provider
- presence at school

### Orientation Session

All students receive their orientation face-to-face during their face-to-face learning days.
- Overview of “Hybrid” option
- Review of Schoology features
- Enrollment commitment
- Attendance criteria and grading policy
- Interventions for students not making progress
- Tech Support

Virtual Learners are required to attend a virtual orientation prior to starting this program. The orientation will cover:
- Overview of “Full Virtual” option
- Review of Schoology features
- Enrollment commitment
- Attendance criteria and grading policy
- Interventions for students not making progress
- Additional Support Options (mentor role)
- Tech Support

### Special Education/504

Special educators will support students with IEPs.

Student special education supports will be made in collaboration with families to ensure that students will receive their accommodations. The accommodations may be implemented differently in the virtual environment.

### Parent/Guardian Expectations

Parents/Guardians will support their children in the same way they support in a traditional model on the days children attend school.

On days when children are learning from home, parents may need to provide support to establish routines and habits that support online learning and assist as needed with assignments.

A parent/guardian serves as a learning coach to support their child by:
- Monitoring progress and contacting the teacher(s) with any concerns
- Ensuring student keeps pace within his/her courses and completes all assignments weekly
- Ensuring student’s daily participation in virtual classes and adherence to the daily class schedule
May a parent opt out of their first choice?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elementary School</th>
<th>Elementary School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hybrid Learning Model</td>
<td>Full Virtual Learning Model</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Families will have an opportunity to change to a Full Virtual option in the second term beginning on November 10, 2020.</td>
<td>Families will have an opportunity to change to a Hybrid Model in the second term beginning on November 10, 2020.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Middle School: In-School Hybrid Learning Model vs. Full Virtual Learning Model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Courses Available and Student Schedules</th>
<th>Middle School Hybrid Learning Model</th>
<th>Middle School Full Virtual Learning Model (FVLM)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students will be enrolled in seven courses based on registration for the 2020/2021 school year. Students will be assigned to a cohort. Each cohort will attend school two days per week and be in virtual learning three days. Students will receive in-person instruction in English/Language Arts, Math, Science, Social Studies, and an Exploratory course two times per week. Students will have in-person Physical Education/Health and an elective class once a week. *Some 8th grade electives may meet twice a week.</td>
<td>Students will take English/Language Arts, Math, Science, Social Studies, an Exploratory/Elective, and Physical Education and Health Education. Students enrolled in Algebra, Geometry, Spanish or French may be assigned to a high school section taught by the FCPS Virtual School. In order to provide as many online learning opportunities as possible, students may be assigned to sections that are filled with students from various FCPS middle schools and taught by teachers that are not located at your child’s assigned school.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Advisory | Students will participate in an advisory group twice per week. | FVLM students will participate in an online advisory group once per week. |
### Middle School

#### Hybrid Learning Model

**Learning Time and Engagement Expectations**

Students will be expected to be engaged in the learning process for approximately **30 hours per week including 14 hours of in-person time at school on their assigned cohort days.**

The remaining weekly hours will be spent reading, attending virtual office hours, working on projects and completing assignments.

In-Person/Face-to-Face Days may include:
- direct instruction (six, 55-minute periods)
- discussions and conferences
- lab work and projects (to the extent possible based on health guidelines)
- presentations and other interactive opportunities
- advisory activities

Virtual Learning Days may include:
- independent practice and review
- completion of assigned projects and activities
- synchronous sessions via Google Meet most likely on Wednesdays

#### Full Virtual Learning Model (FVLM)

Students will be expected to be engaged in the learning process for approximately **30 hours per week,** including:
- attending two online sessions per week for each course as well as any scheduled office hours
- attending one virtual advisory period per week
- completing and submitting virtual assignments and activities for feedback
- reviewing feedback provided by teacher and resubmitting assignments as needed
- viewing videos for learning
- utilizing digital tools and software
- working independently, self-advocating, and asking for support when needed

### Parent/Guardian Expectations

During the two **In-Person/Face-to-Face** learning days, parents/guardians will need to provide support for their children, as they have traditionally been accustomed to doing.

During the three **Virtual Learning** days per week, parents are encouraged to serve as a **learning coach** as recommended for students in the full virtual learning model.

A parent/guardian will be expected to serve as a **learning coach** to support their child to establish and maintain appropriate routines and habits that support online learning, ensure regular attendance in lessons and office hours and maintain contact with FCPS teachers.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Online Learning Mentors</th>
<th>The classroom teacher and other instructional/support staff will fulfill this role for students in the Hybrid Learning Model.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full Virtual Learning Model (FVLM)</td>
<td>Full Virtual students will be assigned a weekly check-in with a staff member who has been designated as an online mentor. This mentor will provide technical assistance and general support re: time management, organization, work habits, and study strategies needed to succeed in an online learning environment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grading</td>
<td>Grading will follow FCPS Regulation 500-05: Grading, Reporting, and Intervention and students will receive letter grades.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Education/504</td>
<td>Special educators will be available to support students with IEPs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Attendance

A student may be defined as “present” by their:
- participation/engagement in school activities
- completion of Schoology coursework
- participation in in-person classes and virtual meetings with a teacher or service provider
- completion of assigned classwork during or outside traditional school hours

### Orientation Session

Schools will determine appropriate activities to orient students as they return to school to ensure appropriate health and safety protocols are followed and supports are in place to help each student return to school successfully.

### Grading

Grading will follow FCPS Regulation 500-05: Grading, Reporting, and Intervention and students will receive letter grades.

### Special Education/504

Student special education supports will be made in collaboration with families to ensure that students will receive their accommodations. The accommodations may be implemented differently in the virtual environment.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>May a parent opt out of their first choice?</th>
<th>Middle School Hybrid Learning Model</th>
<th>Middle School Full Virtual Learning Model (FVLM)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hybrid to Virtual:</strong></td>
<td>Students who return to school for face-to-face learning may shift to the “Full Virtual” option on a case-by-case basis with consideration to individual or family circumstances. Due to limited availability of school-based virtual course offerings and sections, this transition may result in a change in course schedule for the student. Any student or family who wishes to change from the In-School Hybrid Learning Model to the Full Virtual Learning Model will be required to complete the FCPS “Change in Learning Model” form and submit it to their school counselor for evaluation and processing.</td>
<td><strong>Full Virtual to Hybrid:</strong> Students who enroll in the “Full Virtual” option may shift back to face-to-face learning at the end of the first term (November) or at the end of the first semester (January). This transition may result in the student being assigned to different teachers. Transportation service for eligible students must be in place, and social distancing in classrooms must be maintained. Any student/family who wishes to change from the Full Virtual Learning Model to the In-School Hybrid Learning Model will be required to complete the FCPS “Change in Learning Model” form and submit it to their school counselor for evaluation and processing.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# High School: In-School Hybrid Learning Model vs. Full Virtual Learning Model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>High School In-School Hybrid Learning Model (Students attend school 2 days a week and participate in virtual learning 3 days a week)</th>
<th>High School Full Virtual Learning Model (FVLM) (Students participate in virtual learning five days a week)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Courses Available**       | Student schedules will be based on registration requests for the 2020/2021 school year and the availability of staffing for some elective courses. Students will take 4 courses each semester. Students will follow the regular bell schedule specific to their high school when in school. Students will be expected to engage in distance learning and complete assignments three days per week when they are not in school. | Students will take four courses based on graduation requirements, registration requests and course availability. In order to provide as many online learning opportunities as possible, students may be assigned to sections that are filled with students from various FCPS high schools and taught by teachers who are not located at the student’s assigned school. Course offerings may be limited:  
- Course offerings will depend on student enrollment and individual school staffing.  
- Frederick County Virtual School course options will depend on seat availability.  
- Some courses may not be conducive to virtual instruction.  
- Course offerings (in areas such as Visual and Performing Arts, Career and Technology Education and Physical Education) may be limited if the essential curriculum standards cannot be performed or assessed in a virtual environment. |
| **Learning Time and Engagement Expectations** | Students will be expected to be engaged in the learning process for approximately **30 hours per week** including **12 hours of in-person instruction on assigned cohort days.** (80-90 minutes per course daily - may be higher for advanced courses) Face-to-face days in school may include:  
- direct instruction | Students will be expected to be engaged in the learning process for approximately **30 hours per week** (80-90 minutes per course daily - may be higher for advanced courses) including:  
- participate in virtual assignments and activities (reading, research, projects, rehearsal, etc.)  
- synchronous sessions via Google Meet for delivery of new content and reinforcement of prior instruction  
- independent practice  
- view videos for learning |
| High School In-School Hybrid Learning Model  
(Students attend school 2 days a week and participate in virtual learning 3 days a week) | High School Full Virtual Learning Model (FVLM)  
(Students participate in virtual learning five days a week) |
|---|---|
| • discussions and conferences  
• lab work and projects (to the extent possible based on health guidelines)  
• presentations and other "interactive" opportunities  
Distance Learning Days may include:  
• synchronous sessions via Google Meet for delivery of new content and reinforcement of prior instruction  
• independent practice  
• completion of assigned projects  
Students will follow the regular bell schedule specific to their high school. | • engage with digital tools and software  
• submit assignments and assessments for feedback and grades based on established timelines (flexible but not self-paced) following expectations for academic integrity  
• work independently, self-advocate, and ask for support when needed to ensure success |
| **Synchronous Learning Expectations** | Students will be expected to access Schoology and/or Frederick County Virtual School (FCVS) courses, utilize online learning tools and attend Google Meet sessions weekly.  
**FLEX, SET, Advocacy** | Students will be expected to access Schoology and/or Frederick County Virtual School (FCVS) courses, utilize online learning tools and attend Google Meet sessions weekly.  
**FLEX, CONNECT, SET or Advocacy** |
| Students will participate in FLEX, CONNECT, SET, or Advocacy on the two days they attend school with their cohort.  
A FLEX, CONNECT, SET or Advocacy block provides opportunities for students to:  
• develop a sense of community with other group members and within the greater school  
• practice and improve social, emotional and academic skills  
Weekly FLEX, CONNECT, SET or Advocacy class via Google Meet provides opportunities for students to:  
• develop a sense of community with other group members and within the greater school  
• practice and improve social, emotional and academic skills  
• discuss school information/updates/opportunities  
• receive support/resources | Students will participate in an online FLEX, CONNECT, SET or Advocacy group once per week.  
**Synchronous Learning Expectations** |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High School In-School Hybrid Learning Model (Students attend school 2 days a week and participate in virtual learning 3 days a week)</th>
<th>High School Full Virtual Learning Model (FVLM) (Students participate in virtual learning five days a week)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| • receive content specific support from their classroom teacher  
• create a strong support system with teachers and other adults who will develop a positive relationship with them and their parents to help when there are questions or concerns | Students will be assigned a weekly check-in with a staff member who has been designated as an online mentor. This mentor will provide technical assistance and general support re: time management, organization, work habits, and study strategies needed to succeed in an online learning environment. |
| **Online Learning Mentors** | The classroom teacher and other instructional/support staff will fulfill this role for students in the Hybrid Learning Model. |
| | Students will be assigned a weekly check-in with a staff member who has been designated as an online mentor. This mentor will provide technical assistance and general support re: time management, organization, work habits, and study strategies needed to succeed in an online learning environment. |
| **Grading** | Grading will follow FCPS Regulation 500-05: Grading, Reporting, and Intervention and students will receive letter grades. |
| **Eligibility** | As communicated in spring 2020, all students will begin the year eligible and student eligibility will follow FCPS Regulation 500-24. Students may participate in extracurricular activities as outlined in FCPS Regulation 500-24. |
| **Attendance** | FCPS Regulation 400-98 addresses student attendance. The Regulation provides definitions related to attendance and codes used to track daily in-person attendance. |
| | A student may be defined as “present” by engaging in equitable opportunities using multiple measures, such as:  
  • participation/engagement in school activities  
  • completion of Schoology course work  
  • verbal or virtual meetings with a service provider  
  • completion of assigned classwork (digital or paper) during or outside traditional school hours |
| A student may be defined as “present” by engaging in equitable opportunities using multiple measures, such as:  
  • participation/engagement in school activities  
  • completion of Schoology course work  
  • verbal or virtual meetings with a service provider  
  • completion of assigned classwork (digital or paper) during or outside traditional school hours |
| **Orientation Session** | High School In-School Hybrid Learning Model  
(Students attend school 2 days a week and participate in virtual learning 3 days a week) | High School Full Virtual Learning Model (FVLM)  
(Students participate in virtual learning five days a week) |
|-------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| **• completion of assigned classwork (digital or paper) during or outside traditional school hours** | **• Students and parents participating in the Full Virtual model will participate in a virtual orientation prior to starting this program. The orientation will cover:**  
  - Overview of “Full Virtual” Learning Model  
  - Review of Schoology features  
  - Enrollment commitment  
  - Attendance criteria and grading policy  
  - Interventions for students not making progress  
  - Additional support options (Mentor role)  
  - Tech support |  

| **Special Education/ 504** | Special educators will be available to support students with IEPs.  
  Special Education and 504 Plan case-managers will communicate with classroom teachers regarding individual student needs/accommodations. | Student special education supports will be made in collaboration with families to ensure that students will receive their accommodations. The accommodations may be implemented differently in the virtual environment. |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| **Parent/Guardian Expectations** | Parents/Guardians will need to provide support for their children, as they have traditionally, on the days students are present for face-to-face learning.  
During the three days per week their children are engaged in online learning, parents are encouraged to serve as a learning coach as recommended for students in the full virtual learning model. | A parent/guardian will be expected to serve as a learning coach to support their child to establish and maintain appropriate routines and habits that support online learning, ensure regular attendance in lessons and office hours and maintain contact with FCPS teachers.  
See Parent Guardian Learning Coach HS (Appendix A) |
High School In-School Hybrid Learning Model (Students attend school 2 days a week and participate in virtual learning 3 days a week)

May a parent or student opt out of their first choice?

Hybrid to Full Virtual: Students who return to school for face-to-face learning may shift to the “Full Virtual” option on a case-by-case basis with consideration to individual/family circumstances. Due to limited availability of school-based virtual course offerings and sections, this transition may result in a change in course schedule for the student.

Any student/family who wishes to change from the In-School Hybrid Learning Model to the Full Virtual Learning Model will be required to complete the FCPS “Change in Learning Model” form and submit it to their school counselor for evaluation and processing.

Full Virtual to Hybrid: Students who enroll in the “Full Virtual” option may shift back to face-to-face learning after the initial 10-day add/drop period, at midterm, or at end of term. This transition may result in the student being assigned to different teachers. Transportation service for eligible students must be in place, and social distancing in classrooms must be maintained.

Any student/family who wishes to change from the Full Virtual Learning Model to the In-School Hybrid Learning Model will be required to complete the FCPS “Change in Learning Model” form and submit it to their school counselor for evaluation and processing.

Instructional Approaches. In the Hybrid instructional model outlined in Stage 2 Yellow, students may be in three groups. Group A will be face-to-face on Monday and Tuesday, Group B will be face-to-face on Thursday and Friday, and some students, Group C, may be fully virtual. (This may vary by level with secondary schools possibly providing full virtual sections for courses.)

Teacher management of instruction while having multiple groups of students is a notable challenge. Some examples of instructional approaches that teachers could use to address teaching with three groups are listed below.

**Station Rotation Model:**
On Monday and Tuesday, Group A is face-to-face, while Groups B and C are completing virtual learning tasks. On Wednesday, each group rotates to the next learning rotation with Group C in the face-to-face rotation through synchronous instruction. On Thursday and Friday, the groups rotate again with Group B in the face to face rotation.

**Playlist Model:**
Each group is provided with a playlist that outlines the learning goals and assignments for the week. As each group meets face-to-face on their assigned days, students continue working on the playlist while teachers are able to work with individual students or small groups for
assessment, reteaching, and extension. This may allow teachers to check in with students participating virtually as well.

**Enhancements to the Virtual Learning Experience**

In both the all full virtual or hybrid instructional models, the virtual experience will be enhanced for students in the 2020/2021 school year based on student, staff, and parent feedback. Consistent themes emerged from the initial survey offered to staff and families, as well as in the end-of-year reflection activities with staff and students.

**Digital Tools.** FCPS has been building the digital ecosystem for several years. Several high-quality tools were available and used during the Continuity of Learning period such as Playposit, Pear Deck, etc. This work continues and has been adjusted based on feedback compiled from families, students, and teachers in order to ensure that Virtual Learning is an improved experience over the Distance Learning experience from spring of 2020. Examples of digital tools added this year include, but are not limited to:

- Google Enterprise tools (enhanced features for Google Meet, originality reports, etc.)
- Legends of Learning (Elementary Science)
- Lexia Core 5 (Elementary Language Arts learning software)
- Onshape (CTE engineering design software)
- Overdrive (Media ebook platform)
- Screencast-o-matic (screencasting tool)

**Synchronous Instruction and Support.** Students, staff, and families alike valued the opportunities for students to connect with their teachers and classmates using Google Meet. This will be utilized by all staff in the 2020/2021 school year. Further, consistent feedback requested a desire for more teacher instruction versus support sessions. Students wished for more clarity in teacher direction and assignments. All teachers received professional learning in the use of Google Meet in June of 2020. Best practices for collaboration using Google Meet as a live online video conferencing tool, including resources for teachers to share with parents and students, is available in a guidance document.

**Single Learning Management System.** Finally, families requested a desire for students to be in one digital platform to administer virtual learning. For this reason, the Schoology Learning Management System (LMS) will be utilized by all staff for course management in the coming school year. Consistent teacher feedback requested training to use the tools required in a virtual setting. To this end, central staff implemented a flexible professional learning model at the end of the school year and into the summer to support the needs of teachers. A combination of on-demand professional learning videos and courses are still available to teachers, and live webinars will be scheduled close to the return of school.

**Supporting Resources**

Curriculum, Instruction, & Innovation is developing courses and student facing resources that align to standards, engage students, maintain rigor, formatively assess and encourage Mind Brain Education (MBE) strategies. Blueprints are ready-made sets of resources that teachers can quickly add to their
Schoology classes. These resources could include instructional videos, activities and assignments, formative assessments and more. When teachers use Blueprint resources, they will spend less time creating their own resources and more time planning for synchronous instruction, providing direct support to students, and giving feedback on student learning and student work products. Depending on grade level and content area, teachers can access Schoology resources and in a matter of seconds have a whole module and/or a single resource in their course ready to use or customize for their students’ needs. The following are examples of the support resource being provided at the elementary and secondary levels:

**Grading.** In order to ensure consistent practice across elementary schools, guidance and training resources for the use of the Schoology gradebook will be provided for elementary teachers. Secondary teachers were trained last year.

**Elementary English Language Arts.** The Elementary English Language Arts Team is working with a cohort of literacy specialists and classroom teachers to create a comprehensive plan for elementary ELA instruction whether instruction occurs face-to-face, virtually, or a combination of the two. The team is working to create guidance for ELA instructional models for synchronous and asynchronous instruction. The team also is creating and curating instructional resources to support distance learning including instructional videos, anchor charts, digital texts, online text resources, and student response resources. All resources created are student-facing and will be readily available to teachers through Schoology. All resources are aligned to the MD College and Career Ready Standards and support explicit instruction in foundational skills, reading comprehension, writing, and language. The Reading Foundational Skills standards that have been designated as priority instruction by MSDE are supported by video lessons to ensure explicit, systematic phonics instruction. Emphasis was placed on creating instructional resources that are scaffolded for students and easily accessible and understandable for any one supporting student instruction especially in a virtual model.

**Elementary Math.** The Elementary Math Team and Elementary Math Specialists, along with many dedicated and teachers, are creating face-to-face as well as virtual resources. Within the Schoology platform, teachers will find grade level blueprint courses that serve to present the following resources aligned to priority standards: (a) student-facing instructional videos, (b) model (anchor) charts, (c) problem solving prompts, (d) unit formatives, (e) weekly formative tasks, and (f) nine weeks of two-day ready-made virtual student-facing lessons. Learning maps and pacing guides are located on the digital resource tab within Curriculum Now. All resources will be uploaded to both our Schoology courses as well as our Curriculum Now site.

**Elementary Science.** Teachers and curriculum staff have been busy adapting elementary science resources. By late July, distance learning options for all kindergarten through grade five science units will be available in Schoology for teachers to begin planning instruction. Blueprint courses for each science unit, kindergarten through grade five, are also being developed in Schoology.

**Elementary Social Studies.** Work is being done to take current Elementary Social Studies Curriculum maps and face-to-face student resources and convert them to student facing digital resources. Then
Blueprint courses in Schoology for kindergarten through grade five elementary social studies units will be created in order to help teachers provide virtual social studies lessons when necessary.

**Elementary Physical Education & Health.** Teacher leaders are continuing to work and create modified pacing guides for adapting to a hybrid implementation model. Pacing guides will be adapted to align with essential curriculum and guidance documents. The Curriculum Specialist is working to provide an instructional implementation plan that supports blended models for both face-to-face and online learning. Plans to support teacher resource-sharing and instructional best practices are being considered within the Schoology learning management system. These plans will likely result in a modification to the current benchmark assessment system. Additionally, a work group, composed of thirteen kindergarten through grade five classroom teacher-leaders, has been convened to develop a comprehensive implementation plan for elementary health education. Currently under development is a year-long plan for program implementation that is both robust and fluid, with the flexibility to transition in and out of a blended, hybrid model for instruction. Lessons will be identified for face-to-face implementation, online implementation, or flexibly implemented in either setting. Lessons will be aligned to the current essential curriculum.

**Elementary Visual & Performing Arts (EVPA).** Teacher leaders continue to create modified kindergarten through grade 5 EVPA curriculum and pacing guides. These resources will be aligned to prioritized critical content standards, and will contain links to support both face-to-face and virtual learning. Schoology groups have been created in all three content areas for the purposes of resource sharing, best practice inspiration, and collegial collaboration in the application of Schoology in EVPA.

**Secondary English/Language Arts (ELA).** Teachers have been busy updating the secondary ELA resources during Summer Curriculum Writing Workshops. By late July, blueprints for all ELA courses in grades 6-12 will be available in Schoology for teachers to begin planning instruction. Likewise, resources for on-boarding teachers as well as students are being developed for the opening of schools in August.

**Secondary Mathematics.** Teams of teachers have been working to create Schoology blueprint courses for all middle school mathematics courses, and Algebra 1, Geometry and Algebra. Each of these blueprint courses contain student-facing and teacher-facing resources ready for teacher planning and use. In addition, onboarding resources for both teachers and students are being created and will be available. Teachers familiar with upper level math courses (beyond Algebra 2) are also creating instructional resources housed in Schoology groups that can be used in a digital learning environment.

**Secondary Science.** Teacher teams have been working to create blueprint courses for Grade 6, 7 and 8 science as well as all Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) aligned high school science courses including Physics of Earth and Space, Biology, Chemistry, Environmental Science and Algebra Based Physics. Blueprints will include student-facing resources, formative assessments, simulations, activities and assignments.
**Secondary Social Studies.** Teams of teachers are working together to produce digital unit plans focused on centrally identified priority standards in all core courses grades 6-11. Teams are developing both teacher and student-facing materials that will be available through Schoology. Formative assessment of key thematic concepts and social studies skills and processes are embedded in these units to provide teachers actionable data for use in planning instruction to meet the needs of all learners. Bi-weekly curriculum and instruction support sessions have been scheduled for teachers as FCPS advances into the early part of the new school year.

**Secondary Physical Education & Health.** Teacher leaders are creating additional resources to support the health education blueprint courses created this spring. FCPS is focusing on resources to support teaching family life, mental health (suicide awareness), and sexual abuse and assault. Professional learning opportunities related to these topics are being planned and recorded with the assistance of state and national experts. Blueprint courses are also being developed for Sports Medicine and virtual strength training. Physical education resources are being developed to support instruction in a variety of environments. Possible environments include virtual or face-to-face with limitations. Schoology groups are being created to support professional learning networks this fall.

**Secondary Visual & Performing Arts Updates.** Teacher leaders have been working to create blueprint courses for the following middle school curricula: Theater Arts 6-8, Visual Art 6-8, Creative Arts, and Music. Additionally, resources continue to be developed to deliver Music Performance Lab with limited shared materials and an emphasis on digital delivery. Teacher leaders have been working to create blueprint courses for the following high school music curricula: Drawing & Painting, Intro to Theater, American Pop Music. Digital resources for supporting the hybrid instruction of Piano, Guitar, and Ceramics are also being developed to support the prioritization of face-to-face time versus digital delivery. Schoology groups for each content area continue to be updated with recent research and resources regarding planning for fall instruction.

**Career & Technology.** Curriculum teams are creating teacher and student facing unit materials into Schoology blueprint course for the following:

- Middle School Courses: Learn Apply and Build 21st Century Skills (6th grade), Food Science (6th grade), Invention and Innovation (7th grade), Computer Science Investigation (7th grade), Pre-Engineering (8th grade), & Life Skills (8th grade).

**Content Area Reopening Plans.** Each content area has developed a reopening plan. To learn more about how specific content areas are enhancing support including leveraging new tools, targeting learning loss, and providing guidance to maximize face-to-face instructional time, click on the appropriate link below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elementary</th>
<th>Secondary</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Health and Physical Education</td>
<td>Career and Technology Education</td>
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Access to Technology

FCPS one-to-one technology deployment will continue at the secondary level and a device will be made available for all secondary students. Elementary students who need a device to support virtual learning will be provided one upon request.

Internet access hotspots will continue to be available for families in need to ensure access in the 2020/2021 school year. Families were allowed to retain the devices this summer to support any online learning opportunities this summer. Hotspots are available for students based on the needs identified by the school administrators.

Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

Staff from across the Academics, Curriculum, Transformation and Student Achievement (ACTS) Division collaborate each spring to design a comprehensive assessment program for the school system. This year, staff are considering the need to identify a baseline for student performance in the critical areas of math and reading for each and every FCPS learner. The system’s computer diagnostic assessment will be administered at the beginning of the year and at other appropriate points to gauge student progress in the 2020/2021 school year. In addition, the school system’s early literacy screener will be given to all students in grades kindergarten, one, and two. Finally, the school system’s standards aligned, formative benchmarks will be utilized to assist school teams in appropriately evaluating student progress in the standards. Teacher assessment will also be a critical component of ensuring students are on track in the standards. The plan will specifically address the need to determine student progress as well as skill and learning gaps that may have occurred during the conclusion of the 2019/2020 school year. The finalization of the plan will be presented to the Board of Education of Frederick County Curriculum and Instruction Committee on July 29, 2020. The final assessment plans for 2020/2021 are found at the following links:

Elementary School Virtual Assessment Schedule

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elementary</th>
<th>Secondary</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Language Arts</td>
<td>English Language Arts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math</td>
<td>Health and Physical Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>Media</td>
<td>Math</td>
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<td>Science</td>
<td>Media</td>
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<td>Social Studies</td>
<td>Science</td>
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<td>Visual and Performing Arts</td>
<td>Social Studies</td>
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<td>Visual and Performing Arts</td>
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<td></td>
<td>World Languages</td>
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Curriculum and instruction resources will be designed and adjusted to support students who have experienced learning loss. When introduced to new content, teachers will have formative assessment tools to determine if any learning gaps exist. If gaps are evident, the prerequisite standards that were not mastered in the previous spring can be targeted through reteaching to support the grade-level standard.

**Accelerated Learning Process (ALP) and Equity**

The Accelerated Learning Process (ALP) is an invaluable use of time for educators to collaborate and discuss individual student’s learning and progress. Fortunately, this systemic process was well established prior to this spring’s building closure and teachers were able to continue the process in a virtual environment. Whether schools reopen virtually or face-to-face, ALP will be a vital avenue to support FCPS students and ensure equitable instruction. This section provides an overview of ALP and describes the critical function it serves in educating FCPS students.

The ALP is a systemic process for ongoing, job-embedded professional learning, educator collaboration, and the continuous, collective assessment of student learning with the specific goal of transforming teaching and learning. This process requires regular meetings that offer an opportunity for educators to:

- Administer data-driven decisions that promote differentiated instruction
- Examine student work
- Monitor student learning
- Share instructional best practices

The FCPS Accelerated Learning Process (ALP) is also a flexible process in which teams of educators, pre-kindergarten through grade 12 (including general education teachers, special education teachers, English Learner teachers, specialists, and administrators) engage in ongoing collective inquiry with the goal of promoting achievement for all students. This agile process involves four components working in an integrated fashion: content knowledge, instructional design, evidence of learning, and student agency.

The process is led at the school level to improve instruction in all classrooms and adds value whether face-to-face instruction or virtual learning is occurring. The real power of this process occurs in short cycles of formative assessment that become part of the way teachers attend to their mission of educating all students. Teams of teachers may meet on a regular basis for informal discussions to plan for, adjust, and reflect on the learning happening in their classrooms. They will also focus on what they need to learn professionally in order to better accelerate the learning of students. Teams will also consider what they've learned during one instructional cycle and discuss how to apply what they've learned in subsequent cycles.

The foundation of the process is when teachers develop a deep understanding of their Content Knowledge by analyzing standards and exploring how students demonstrate mastery of the content. Teams agree to plan for collection and analysis of Evidence of Learning, discussing how students will demonstrate their learning through assessments and examining student data and work samples to evaluate how well students are progressing in their understanding of the given content. Teams utilize their deep understanding of content and knowledge and evidence of learning to guide their Instructional Design. Teachers are intentional about using instructional models, strategies, and techniques that best
help students to master the given content. Teachers will use evidence of learning from carefully designed instruction, quantitatively or qualitatively, to provide students with task-oriented/actionable feedback and goal setting to cultivate Student Agency.

School leaders and ALP team members recognize that job-embedded professional learning must occur throughout the process as educators work together to increase their expertise in each of the ALP components.

The strong connection between the Accelerated Learning Process and equity in FCPS educational programming is described below:

Where are we going? (Content Knowledge)
Teachers must be aware of learning goals and the learning trajectory of their students. They have to know where students are headed and they have to make students aware of where they’re headed. This conversation must be devoid of assumptions about student ability and potential. Teacher expectations can be based on unexamined beliefs, and subsequently, the lessons they design can yield inequitable results in achievement.

Teams need to ensure lesson planning affords equitable access to grade-level content and opportunity to master grade level standards. Coaches need to be aware of low expectations and ensure rigorous content and assessments. Low expectations and lack of rigor could signal that the current way of planning and instructing is actually causing student growth to be less than what is expected or possible over an extended period of time (Fisher, et. al. 2019).

When teams are vocal about what students need to learn, low expectations surface and can be redirected by the team. Asking, “Where are we going?” keeps the focus on grade-level expectations and supports that ensure achievement.

Where are we now? (Evidence of Learning)

“Equity demands that teachers build on what students already know and fill in gaps in learning opportunities” (Fisher, et. al. 2019). The purpose of ALP is to offer teachers time to analyze current levels of performance against learning goals and close the gap for each student, despite the possibility of previous inequitable access to learning.

Common scoring of shared formatives and classroom tasks is critical. When teachers are using the same criteria for grading, not only is scoring more equitable, but teachers can have a common conversation about student performance and identify misconceptions in learning. It is important for teams to not only look at student strengths, but also to conduct an error analysis to determine patterns of error or gaps between where students are and where they need to advance to in order to master learning objectives.

Building relationships with students and knowing how they respond to feedback is critical. ALP teams must discuss how to share success criteria with students and how to provide time for self- and peer-evaluation of work against success criteria, as well as time to process, and apply teacher feedback and reflect on learning.

How do we move learning forward? (Instructional Design)

ALP collaboration should result in more than identification of and commitment to certain instructional strategies. Teachers need to talk about how to implement strategies and how they’ll adjust based on
student performance. They also need to refrain from selecting only one or two instructional strategies for all learners. An equitably strategic approach to instructional design means meeting each student where they are and helping them along the trajectory of their learning to achieve mastery of grade-level expectations.

Teacher teams need to be aware of their own biases, assumptions, and expectations as they design learning opportunities. Talking out loud as a team is a great way for teachers to collectively defuse thinking that might perpetuate inequities and to help each other solve challenges to student achievement.

Sharing best practices and successful strategies is a key benefit of collaborative planning. The same is true when discussing the cultural relevance of materials used in instruction. Often teachers have found and used materials and resources that honor the experiences that students bring to school. Those teachers need to have the opportunity to share with others who are still looking for ways to reach and engage their students.

What learning occurred today? (Job-embedded Professional Learning)

Job-embedded professional learning is the unspoken fifth component of ALP, a cornerstone of effective team collaboration. ALP must address both student and teacher learning. ALP coaches listen carefully to the collaborative conversation to identify areas of need and insert professional learning immediately.

Teams also need to ask themselves, “What did we learn from our students and what will we do about it?” This encourages decision-making that is informed by student performance. As much as possible, gathering evidence of learning that demonstrates student thinking (analyzing work samples instead of spreadsheets of overall quantitative data) helps teachers administer decisions based on truly meaningful information from their students.

Who benefited and who did not?

It may seem like ALP should address student needs solely on an individual basis; however, teams also need to analyze performance in relationship to student group status. It may be a little uncomfortable at first, but teams regularly need to ask themselves, “Who did/did not benefit from our time together today?” In addition, asking “What is our impact on student learning?” and “What are our commitments to impact learning for all students?” are good questions to ensure collaboration is rooted in equity-informed practices.


Additional Scheduling Considerations to Support an Equitable Education Program

Some students may need additional instructional time or support from teachers. Traditionally, FCPS has implemented Extended Learning Opportunity (ELO) programs to support students who may need additional support or instruction. In any stage, FCPS will continue to offer support to identified students beyond regular school hours. Student feedback strongly suggested a preference to be able to work at times that were convenient to them, sometimes beyond the traditional school day. School leaders will create flexible opportunities for students to receive support from staff beyond the school day. Schools
will have the flexibility to set up tutoring support beyond the school day to support students who may be working beyond typical school hours.

**Family and Caregiver Assistance**

FCPS staff is in the process of developing online resources to assist parents and caregivers with:

- Accelerating learning such as strategies to support the development of executive functioning skills and strategies to maximize memory and retention.
- Supporting social-emotional health and wellness, including strategies for appropriately balancing screen time and perseverance.

**Grading**

In the fourth quarter of the 2020 school year, FCPS implemented a lenient grading system at the encouragement of state leaders and with feedback from students and families. While this may have been the best plan during the spring closure, consistent feedback from stakeholders indicated challenges associated with this plan. Teachers indicated a reduction of engagement from students, particularly at the secondary level, and a large majority of students/parents actually opted for the traditional letter grade to earn “credit” for their hard work during distance learning this past spring. For this reason, FCPS will follow its existing grading regulations in the 2020/2021 school year. Student feedback supported the importance of teacher flexibility with deadlines in a virtual and more flexible learning environment in which students are learning and demonstrating learning at their own pace. Several elements of FCPS Grading Regulations will be critical in any stage.

- Important consideration should be given to each student and FCPS’ multi-tiered system of support that must be offered in any instructional model.
- Based on student input, teachers should carefully consider the ways in which they will provide feedback to students as to whether or not students are meeting expectations.
- Learning activities should be designed to both challenge and support students.
- The design of classroom activities should account for the varied needs of students.
- Whether virtual or in person instruction is occurring, teachers can still monitor and informally evaluate student work regularly providing oral and written feedback throughout the learning process.
- Finally, determination of report card grades in response to a student’s Individualized Education Program (IEP) should be a collaborative process among general educators and special educators.

The FCPS teaching contract requires a minimum of one formally graded assignment per week, which can be achieved in a virtual, hybrid, or traditional instructional model. Grading practices will adhere to the procedures outlined in the FCPS Grading Regulations 500-06 (Elementary) and 500-05 (Secondary).
Handling of Instructional Materials

In order to minimize, to the greatest extent possible, the sharing of instructions materials, FCPS developed a two-pronged plan for (a) creating and funding Personal Supply Kits at no cost to families, and (b) implementing plans for cleaning and disinfecting or quarantining shared materials.

**Personal Supply Kits.** These are a minimal list of school supplies that would be reasonable for students to bring back and forth to school each day. These would supplement the school supplies that students bring from home. They may be switched out at different times in the year based on the instructional activities at that time. The kits would ensure students are using only their assignment materials.

**Cleaning and Disinfecting or Quarantining Procedures.** FCPS will train staff in cleaning and disinfecting and quarantining procedures for instructional materials that cannot be easily or affordably included in Personal Supply Kits. These materials will be either cleaned or disinfected using FCPS procedures and custodial supplies or the materials will be placed into quarantine for 72 hours before being used again.

Printed Packets

Connectivity and use of Chromebooks will be the primary vehicle for instruction for the 2020/2021 school year; therefore, FCPS is not planning to create, print and distribute packets on a large scale. Staff is working diligently to develop Schoology blueprints, digital resources and instructional videos. As individual needs dictate, staff will work to provide packets when needed.

Within Stage 2, Hybrid Model, teachers may send paper assignments home with students for completion and return as necessary.

Summer Programming

While this plan focuses primarily on the 2020/2021 school year, stakeholders should note that reopening efforts have already begun with a series of robust summer offerings. FCPS summer program plan is an important step in re-opening. Each program was determined with an equity-based approach focusing our efforts to support students with identified learning needs. Students in higher poverty settings, students with disabilities, and English learners were a significant focus in selecting school sites and programs. The plan includes a combination of face-to-face as well as virtual learning opportunities. Face-to-face opportunities will convene based on the guidance provided within the FCPS Reopening plan. [Summer Program Plan 2020](#)

Professional Learning for Staff

FCPS is committed to continuing to enhance the ability of staff to skillfully instruct students in ever-changing conditions and environments. As a result, a full complement of professional learning models and opportunities will be implemented during the 2020/2021 school year. Based on FCPS commitment to being a research-informed school district, the principles of Mind Brain Education and the components of human development influenced the development of a professional learning plan to meet the needs of our students while being responsive to the needs of adult stakeholders. Staff survey results indicate that
teachers both desire and require additional professional learning opportunities related to virtual education; however, cognitive load is a significant concern at this time. The professional learning opportunities and structures that follow were crafted through the lens of four key questions:

- Is it simplified?
- Is it relevant?
- Is it informed by research?
- Is it timely?

**Increased Mentorship.** Recognizing the significant impact of abbreviated pre-service experiences and the challenges of being a new teacher at this time, the number of new teacher mentors and master teachers to support new hires was increased.

**Enhanced Induction Program.** The three-year induction program for new teachers was revamped to incorporate key components of virtual learning while ensuring relationship building and networking to address the social-emotional needs of students as well as educators. Induction for new hires begins August 1, 2020 via Schoology and will include a hybrid New Hire Symposium.

**Summer 2020 Structured Feedback and Professional Learning.** In June 2020, each teacher engaged in a Virtual Learning Self-Assessment as part of the process to reflect and provide feedback on the Continuity of Learning period. Level and content-specific or role-specific professional learning requirements and options were designed to meet unique needs of all certificated staff. Staff engaged in these learning sessions during Summer 2020.

**Schoology Professional Learning.** FCPS defined essential proficiencies and performance standards to guide teachers to excellence in the use of the system Learning Management System, Schoology. These include evidence of ability to: create and deploy learning materials/activities; deliver and receive assignments; provide feedback and grades; and communicate course updates and day-to-day communication. A la carte videos and live training webinars were available throughout the summer and will be available during the 2020/2021 school year. Additionally, teachers have access to the premium 24/7 chat and phone support through Schoology, the FCPS Schoology Help Center and the FCPS Schoology Help Desk.

**Virtual Learning Mentors.** Vanguard Program graduates will serve as Virtual Learning Mentors for each school throughout the year, providing ready-to-use tips, screencasts, online workshops, on-demand office hours, and other consultative services to increase teacher comfort with the challenges of facilitating remote learning.

**Designing and Implementing High Quality Online Learning (2-credit MSDE Course).** A newly-created MSDE course will be offered widely during the summer, fall, and spring sessions. This course equips educators to effectively facilitate virtual learning experiences and organize the online learning environment in a manner that balances content and connection. The course is offered online and the structure will allow participants to explore resources and current research, engage in collaborative discussions, and gain practice with tech tools that may support and enhance the online experience for diverse students. In addition to a strong emphasis on best practices for virtual learning, the course integrates Mind Brain Education principles grounded in research about learning and equity. All
components of the course are designed to specifically address the importance of self-care, building resilience, and teacher well-being that are more critical than ever in the context of a pandemic.

**Virtual Learning and Beyond (1-credit MSDE Course).** Recognizing the balance of work and home demands that will likely be a reality for many educators in the 2020/2021 school year, the option exists to take a 1-credit, asynchronous, on-demand course. The course includes topics such as: creating a sense of belonging and community in a virtual environment, organizing/structuring courses and content delivery in LMS, tending to vital issues of equity, virtual communication, collaboration using technological tools, utilizing formative assessment, and providing meaningful feedback.

**School-Based Professional Learning.** Special considerations will be given to the quantity, focus, and delivery of school-based professional learning during this time. In addition to the essential questions stated above, the work group set forth the following guiding principles:

- Maintain focus on the FCPS priorities that existed prior to the Covid-19 pandemic: high quality instruction through the Framework for Teaching; Accelerated Learning Process; and a commitment to Equity and closing the achievement gap.
- Collaboration for teachers and instructional staff will be paramount to meeting the needs of students and addressing academic and logistical challenges. Any scheduling models used should allow for significant time for instructional staff to collaborate, particularly to create efficiencies and maximize expertise. In addition to in-person or video conferencing as collaboration options, Schoology offers the ability to link courses and share resources and tools, creating supportive instructional networks for teachers while enhancing expertise for students.
- Professional learning at the school level should be informed by data and responsive to the changing the needs of staff and students as conditions warrant. It is recommended that FCPS leverage the efficiencies of Schoology through a systemic deployment of hubs for professional learning that can be customized to meet individual school needs. This reduces cognitive load for staff and can meet the learning needs of individual teams and departments, while providing access to administrators and central office staff.

**Leader Learning Modules.** Leading schools, programs, and departments during crisis and recovery require specialized professional learning opportunities for principals, assistant principals, coordinators, supervisors, directors, and other leaders. Multiple asynchronous, on-demand modules will be available to all leaders throughout the 2020/2021 school year. Leaders may opt to take these modules for credit. Modules will be designed to meet real-time needs in schools, while remaining grounded in the Professional Standards for Education Leaders.

**Lead and Learn: Leading Through a Crisis.** Facilitated by the Leadership Development team and Deputy Superintendent Mike Markoe, the Leading Through a Crisis workshops will provide regular touchpoints for current leaders to reflect on the challenges that they are dealing with on a day-to-day basis through the context of leadership principles. By applying the lens of effective leadership to the realities of leading in uncertain and complex environments, leaders will have the opportunity to problem-solve together and reflect personally on the short and long term goals of leading in their own context.
Summer Learning & Collaboration/Creation of School-Based Hubs. School-based administrative teams gathered multiple times during the month of July for focused learning and collaboration in anticipation of the needs of students, staff, and families during the 2020/2021 school year. One component of this learning is the development of school-based Hubs for professional learning, collaboration, and communication through Schoology. The Hubs will provide a structure through which instructional staff can collaborate and share. By leveraging the efficiencies of technology to streamline messaging and the sharing of systemic and school-created learning materials, the Hubs will also serve as a valuable conduit for consistent and timely distribution of information to all staff, regardless of physical environment.

New Leader Coaching Program. Entering a new administrative role as an assistant principal or being promoted as a new principal presents new responsibilities as well as new challenges. Both of these are particularly heightened as a result of the complications of Covid-19 and the uncertainty that is likely to cast a shadow over much of the 2020/2021 school year. In order to provide personalized, contextualized support to new leaders, Frederick County Public Schools will train and deploy leader coaches. A joint effort of the Leadership Development team and the School Administration and Instructional Leadership directors, the coaches will provide direct support to new leaders and will participate with them in mastermind groups designed to engage in timely, relevant, equity-focused problem-solving and innovation.

Education Support Employee Professionals’ Learning Portal. Education support employee professionals play a range of critical roles in every department of the school system, so their ongoing learning -- as well as specialized learning during school closure and preparation for recovery -- are of great importance. A Support Employee Professional Learning Portal was created in Spring 2020 to serve as an electronic repository for modules, courses, resources, and training components that can be accessed by support employees from any location. The Portal includes information to support relationship-building, social-emotional needs of children, health and wellness, mindset, technology, workplace efficiency, as well as programs specific to Frederick County Public Schools. By providing robust offerings in an asynchronous environment, supervisors are able to curate the most appropriate learning content for their support employees while also allowing choice and flexibility. The portal also contains a professional learning record and log of completion so that departments and employees can document and honor completion of Portal offerings.

Enhanced Substitute Onboarding/Access/Professional Learning. Recognizing the challenges of substituting during this unique period of time, the onboarding and learning materials for substitutes will be expanded, adjusted, and housed in Schoology to meet the dynamic needs of their role. In addition to traditional onboarding content, special emphasis will be added to essential understanding of Schoology, social-emotional health and wellness, equity, and safety protocols.

Online Resources for Families and Caregivers. It will be critical to expand our support during this recovery from school interruption to parents, grandparents, and child care providers who are helping to nurture and guide their children’s education at home. Parents and caregivers have asked for resources and tools to help them with social-emotional strategies, tools for increasing memory and retention, support for executive functioning, and best practices for accelerating learning. Using Frederick County
Public Schools’ background and partnerships in the area of Mind Brain Education, the variety and quantity of online tools and resources available for all caregivers will be expanded and adjusted to meet the current conditions. Outreach to local child care organizations will aid in ensuring a broad reach for these resources. In addition, teachers will have access to information that can be shared with families through their Schoology parent communication platform.

**Community Podcast.** Recognizing that families and child care providers need a variety of flexible options for their own information and learning, an on-demand podcast will provide an engaging, unique, and supportive environment for additional communication. Topics such as making learning meaningful, aiding memory, balancing stress, the importance of sleep and down time, and mindsets will give caring adults the specialized support they need while acknowledging the critical role that they play in their child’s education.
Special Services and Student Supports

The COVID-19 pandemic crisis continues to impact the operation of schools and educational programs during the 2020/2021 school year, especially for students who fall into one or more special populations of students. Students in special populations include those with mental health needs, with disabilities (IEP/504), English learners (EL), those accessing interventions, those identified as homeless, those accessing home/hospital teaching (HHT); and all of whom have individual family, personal, and academic special needs that may have been further intensified by the pandemic school closure.

Deliberate consideration will be given to students who fall within a special population along with strategic and careful reflection to address the unique needs of each special population. Students who fall in one or more of the aforementioned special populations have an increasing risk of achievement and opportunity gaps. These are students who, long before the pandemic school closure, were marginalized and unlikely to attain the kinds of academic growth hoped for, or have positive school experiences. Some are students who are housing insecure, food insecure, or living in situations of abuse and neglect who depend on schools for food, shelter, and social services. The parents and families of many children may not be able to retain the jobs that feed them if there is not an in-person school option to provide childcare while meeting health and safety measures of families, students, and staff. Not all families of students in special populations have access to reliable internet or computers. Students with disabilities (IEP/504) depend on in-person schooling to provide students with supports and services that cannot be replicated exactly the same in a virtual instructional environment, which may manifest as a learning loss. Therefore, prioritizing students in special populations to attend in-person school learning that provides access to instruction and supports, lunches, and social services, to the extent possible, is recommended. This is an important statement that prioritizes students in special populations to access instruction in the format that meets their needs and is feasible. Research advocates that in a crisis such as the pandemic school closure, prioritizing student survival needs will scaffold toward getting students to be critical thinkers. These are students living in an ever-changing global pandemic and experiencing first-hand explicit social unrest that requires intervention and supports that needs to be strategically considered in a virtual setting. While prioritizing the given requirements of health and safety for students, families, and staff in instructing our students of special populations one must reflect upon such decisions through an equity lens.

The Special Services and Student Supports Workgroup developed recovery and reopening plans that align with the guidance provided by the MSDE, the CDC fluid guidance, and data-informed best practice research related to the aforementioned special populations. The Special Services and Student Supports Workgroup charge focused on components relating to the following:

- Ensuring appropriate support for students receiving special services, including students with disabilities, students with 504 plans, EL and students receiving intervention;
- Providing any additional support necessary to address the social-emotional well-being of students;
- Ensuring appropriate support for homeless students and students relying on HHT;
- Meeting the regulatory mandates for compliance with special education law, 504 requirements, and local requirements;
- Coordinating special transportation options;
- Establishing procedures for monitoring attendance;
- Coordinating the efforts of special educators, EL teachers, and general educators in supporting the instructional needs of students while in school and during distance learning; and
- Establishing professional learning opportunities for staff.
To further develop this charge, the Special Services and Student Supports Workgroup was divided into sub-workgroups, consisting of Attendance/HHT, EL, Health Services, Homeless, Interventions, Special Education/504, and Student Social Emotional Well-being. The work group noted two salient priority themes, that became the foundation of their work that included:

1. Providing social emotional well-being instruction and appropriate mental health supports for all students, and
2. Providing flexible schedules and increased synchronous instructional delivery models to special populations, including students with disabilities (IEP/504), EL, students identified as homeless, students accessing Interventions, and students accessing Home Hospital Instruction.

The following are the recommendations of each sub-workgroups for reopening schools within the phased instructional model options.

**Mental Health Supports: Priority Theme 1**

Mental health concerns affect about 17% of students nationwide. For FCPS, this translates into approximately 7,480 students each year who struggle to achieve the social and emotional health required to support executive functions necessary for school success. The most recent Youth Risk Behavior Survey (2018) published in spring 2020 indicated that almost a third (31.2%) of FCPS high school students reported feeling sad or hopeless every day for more than two weeks in a row, and for middle school students, 18% had thought seriously about suicide, 10% had made a suicide plan, and 4.9% had attempted suicide. Added to that is the increased stress from mandated responses to COVID-19 and the impact related to the racial injustice and civil unrest occurring across the nation: social isolation, disruption in work and family routines, financial pressures, and increased exposure to family and community violence, making re-connection with a caring school community imperative.

Data from the Frederick City Police indicates that calls for domestic violence cases increased significantly during March through May of 2020 compared to the same time period last year (39% increase in March, 9% in April, and 71% in May); however, data from the Child Advocacy Center and Child Protective Services shows a decrease in the number of children they served during this same time period, clearly demonstrating that while domestic violence cases increased, services to support those students involved decreased. This perfect storm leaves many more students exposed to family violence without the buffering support of daily connections with educators and referrals to child serving agencies when needed.

Social-emotional difficulties should be anticipated upon the reopening of schools, regardless of the format. School staff must be prepared to adjust routines as well as balance academic curricula with time to help students readjust socially and emotionally to the heightened demands, rigor, social interactions and atypical schedule upon re-entry. A primary focus on building positive relationships with teachers and peers will be the most powerful tool for helping students increase their readiness to learn.

FCPS implements a multi-tiered system of supports to identify and assist students both academically and socially/emotionally. This system should be examined by each school upon return to ensure that student needs are being adequately addressed. As stated previously, positive relationships among students and between students and staff will be a critical component for helping students adjust. As students move
through tiers of support, the number of “touch” points they have in school should increase, ensuring that they have access to supportive relationships.

**Transition Teams.** Transition Teams will be created at each school to support students and staff in the area of social-emotional learning during the reopening of school. For those students whose parents elect full virtual instruction until schools reopen at 100%, a virtual approach will be employed to support the same transition process. The development of a Transition Team at every school will enable each school to meet the unique demands of its population and school culture. Transition Team work can occur virtually or in face-to-face meetings.

**Social Emotional Learning (SEL) Curricula.** FCPS will provide a SEL curriculum to all schools for teachers to implement with students. Investment in building social-emotional skills with students, pre-kindergarten through high school, lays the foundation for academic achievement at all grade levels and the future wellbeing of students and the community. Social-emotional challenges are anticipated upon the reopening of schools, regardless of format.

Lessons will be delivered virtually or face-to-face following all established safety guidelines. Elementary schools will use PATHS curriculum and secondary schools will use Digital Solutions.

FCPS will continue to provide professional learning for all staff implementing SEL for the first time. Staff members require focused professional learning on the specific SEL curriculum they will be implementing to ensure they understand the rationale and to adhere to the fidelity of implementation. Elementary school training began in early June and will be completed by the end of July 2020. Middle school training has also begun and will be completed by the end of July 2020. An overview of SEL training was provided to high school teachers in June 2020. Additional training focused on the Digital Solutions Curriculum which will be available in early October 2020.

FCPS has worked to enhance parent communication in the area of SEL. Written correspondence regarding the implementation of SEL curriculum has already been shared with pre-kindergarten through grade two parents. Written correspondence will also be provided to parents with students in grades 3-5 (Appendix B), middle school (Appendix C), and high schools (Appendix D) implementing the SEL curriculum.

**Community Resources Document.** FCPS created a Community Resources document that will appear on each school’s web page for direct access by families. The aim of this document is to connect families with community resources, promote resilience and mitigate the effects of students’ exposure to adversity.

**Referral Process for Timely Social Emotional Support.** FCPS continues to strengthen its referral process for students who require Tier II and Tier III interventions. Many students are susceptible to the adverse impacts of restricted school-based socialization and limited opportunities for emotional development during the COVID-19 pandemic. Social-emotional difficulties should be anticipated upon the reopening of schools regardless of the format. Teachers will receive awareness training so they can identify common student risk factors and symptoms associated with toxic stress associated with enduring a pandemic and/or social unrest. When staff members are sensitive to students’ distress and adjustment challenges,
the intensity of adverse behavioral or academic impacts is decreased. The goal is for staff to effectively identify students at risk and promptly refer them to the appropriate student services team. Students presenting with emotional crises will receive timely emotional support.

**Restorative Practices.** All FCPS schools have trained staff members from the Department of Student Services who can independently, or in collaboration with the Achievement Specialist for School Culture, provide support for Restorative Practices. Resources have been acquired to support awareness and implementation at all schools (posters, affective questions cards, talking pieces). Video resources will be shared with all stakeholders so they are explicitly aware of the importance of Restorative Practices in all communities.

All schools will work with their School Improvement Teams, trained staff and the Achievement Specialist for School Culture to consider ways of establishing a plan to utilize a Restorative Practices approach.

**Trauma Informed Discipline.** Trauma Informed Discipline eliminates classroom management strategies that promote shaming (clip charts, placing student names on board and tally systems on boards that count negative behaviors). Trauma-informed discipline guidelines is outlined in (Appendix E). It is anticipated there will be an increase in student behavioral concerns, rooted in exposures to stressful experiences related to the impacts from COVID-19 and racial inequities and unrest. Guidance is provided regarding social discord and student risk factors that may be displayed as we move to reopening in (Appendix F). Social, emotional, physical, and academic safety must be prioritized by teachers and administrators in responding to student behavior upon return to school. In light of this, principals will:

- Strive for a temporary moratorium (at least the first quarter) on out-of-school suspensions except for weapons, drugs, threats of imminent harm, and serious bodily injury.
- Monitor numbers of disciplinary actions that are initiated in each class. Increases in referrals should generate a response from administration for additional teacher support.

**Modified Behavioral Threat Assessment Process.** Many students have experienced increased stressors related to mandatory social distancing and recent civil unrest. It is anticipated that when school resumes, there may be threats related to compliance with health rules, health-related bullying, and topics associated with racial injustice and upcoming political elections. Threats to safety will be assessed and managed per existing policy and regulation; however, interviews of students of concern, witnesses, and family members, as well as School Threat Assessment Management Team (STAMT) and Threat Assessment and Management Oversight Team (TAMOT) team meetings may need to be conducted via teleconference until students/staff return to school buildings full time.

**Instructional Models for Special Populations: Preparing for Multiple Scenarios-Priority Theme 2**

Regardless of the phase of reopening for FCPS 2020/2021 school year, it is important to consider the specific needs of students in special populations to access instruction more readily within the model to increase the chances of narrowing both the opportunity and the achievement gap that may have resulted in a learning loss, caused by the pandemic school closure. The following key principles should be considered:
• If all students are required to participate in Full Virtual learning, it is recommended that students identified in special populations:
  o Access increased synchronous learning, face-to-face, to the maximum extent possible, through tele-intervention up to four days per week.
  o Special Education, EL, intervention teachers, home hospital teachers, and content general education teachers, along with related service providers (speech language pathologist, occupational therapist, therapist, etc.) must still work collaboratively to meet individual needs of students in special populations.

• If all students are allowed to access learning in a Hybrid format, with students accessing learning in school two days per week and accessing virtual learning three days per week, it is recommended that students identified in special populations:
  o Based on each student's individual learning needs, access to in-school face-to-face learning may be expanded beyond the two days per week provided for general education students. Students requiring specialized programs for students with disabilities will receive first consideration for this offering. This would allow students to access instruction with typical peers in the classroom and specially-designed instruction with the special education teacher and/or related service provider. This option increases instructional access for all students in special populations with consideration given to face-to-face opportunities up to four days per week.
  o When students in special populations access virtual learning, opportunities increase for synchronous instruction, to the maximum extent possible.
  o Ensure instructional staff understands how to apply learning plan accommodations in the phase of recovery instruction whether full virtual or a hybrid model (Appendix G).

**Student Schedules.** The special population student schedules must also be strategically considered to include the following recommendations:

- Provide flexible schedules and instructional delivery methods. Schedules that afford students with learning challenges increased face-to-face instruction and/or virtual learning are in preparation. This includes:
  - Demonstrating flexibility in providing HHT for students whose health is compromised, or live with high-risk individual(s), and
  - Providing a full virtual opportunity for students where needed to support their families.

- A digital environment could become more standard after schools return to a normal schedule and parents might still need support with this process. Frequent communication between all staff and the parents should be considered to ease the students’ transition to a new, full schedule.

**Professional Learning for Staff.** Professional learning for staff, in the area of instructional models for special populations, must be strategically considered to include the following recommendations:

- Providing training to staff to prepare students in special populations to engage into the school year instructional model specific to them (e.g. students with Autism, those assigned to special programs, English learners, those who are non-verbal, those with significant social-
emotional needs such as anxiety, etc.) to include a tour (virtual or face to face) of the instructional model space, social stories/pictorial representations of safety measures and social distancing, and explicit teaching of weekly instructional schedule to families and students.

- Providing training to instructional certificated staff and support staff, to sharpen instructional delivery that is flexible and synchronous, in a virtual, blended and/or phase 3 model.
- Providing time for staff to collaborate based upon their shared student groups to deliver accessible instruction to students in special populations.

**Attendance Criteria**

Recording and monitoring student attendance is a multi-step process in the virtual learning environment. All teachers will take daily attendance using our Student Information System (eSchool Plus) and the Teacher Access Center (TAC) application. At the secondary level, teachers take class-based attendance daily.

The below text is incorporated in our Systemic Guidebook for Principals and shared with all staff.

**Step by Step Process (Teacher daily responsibilities, identified staff member weekly responsibilities, Student Support Team (SST) weekly responsibilities):**

Each teacher will mark a student as present or absent in TAC to identify who did participate or did not participate in a synchronous google meet session. The homeroom teacher will be the person responsible at the elementary level.

At the secondary level, this must be completed daily after each synchronous google meet session. At the elementary level, once daily by the homeroom teacher.

On Monday morning (or the first day of the week), the identified staff member (possibly registrar or attendance secretary) will print the *Weekly Virtual Learning Attendance Report* from Report Net.

In addition, on Monday morning (or the first day of the week), the school based identified staff member will print the weekly *Schoology Usage Report*. This will provide a list of students who did not use Schoology during that week.

The identified staff member (attendance secretary) will provide the list of students who were marked absent as well as did not access Schoology (as determined by the two reports described above) to the administrators/SST team. This list will be given to the SST team who will review and finalize the list of students who should be marked absent whether lawful or unlawful (and the appropriate absence code). The list will be given to the identified staff member (attendance secretary) who will officially mark the students as absent in eSchool every Friday. This process must be completed weekly.

This process ensures that not only attendance in synchronous sessions is considered when determining attendance. In rare instances, a family may not be able to access recorded synchronous sessions, screencasts, etc. until the late afternoon, evening, or weekends and a child's activities in Schoology, the online learning platform are taken into consideration.
FCPS Regulation 400-98, Student Attendance addresses student attendance. The Regulation provides definitions related to attendance and codes used to track attendance; however, it does not currently address student attendance during virtual learning. As such, staff will draft revisions to this regulation to create attendance codes for virtual and blended instruction. A checklist of options for teachers to use to indicate student engagement in an assigned task during a virtual learning day has been developed.

Creating both present and absent codes related to COVID-19 will allow staff to track the impact of this virus throughout the 2020/2021 school year. The determination of “present” or “absent” for blended and virtual learning must account for equitable opportunities for all students. As such, a student being marked as “present” for learning should be determined using multiple measures.

Overall, a student should be considered as “present” for the day as long as the student engaged in some type of school activity. Completion of Schoology course work, verbal or virtual meetings with a service provider, or completion of assigned classwork provided by the teacher are examples of data to determine student attendance. The relationship between the student’s classroom teacher and service providers allow those staff members to best determine how to record a student’s attendance.

It is recognized that there may be barriers which prevent students from completing learning activities on a daily basis or during traditional school hours; however, a lack of engagement during traditional school hours should not be the determining factor in noting whether or not a student is present or absent for the day. When it cannot be clearly determined whether or not a student met the criteria for being considered “present,” every effort should be made by school staff to contact the student and family. Mental health and community services staff will support monitoring students’ attendance in the virtual and blended instructional models.

FCPS already has a strong structure in place, utilized this past spring, involving student support teams. Key staff, including administrators, counselors, instructional assistants and other special service providers must monitor students’ participation in the instructional program and make every effort, in some cases, daily or weekly, to re-engage. This model will continue during the 2020/2021 school year. Consistent stakeholder input indicated this support team played a critical role in engaging students.

Documenting the attendance of students when they are not in the school building may cause additional work for teachers and support staff. Following are important considerations for determining attendance:

- Use Schoology to document student login history and use for attendance purposes. Using Schoology to track attendance will allow the school system to account for the large majority of students who are logging into their coursework; however, it is recognized that Schoology should not be the only tool used to track attendance in order to ensure equity for all students, as many students will not be able to login consistently to Schoology due to a variety of family constraints.
- Attendance should not be documented solely based on student completion of work or the amount of time it takes students to complete assignments. In the traditional educational model students are considered present when they enter classrooms in the school building; however,
that does not reflect their level of engagement in their classwork. The same needs to be considered for digital learning.

- A student should be counted ‘present’ for the day as long as the student engaged in some type of school activity. A school activity may include Schoology course work, verbal or virtual meetings with a service provider or completion of paper copies of classwork provided by the teacher. This ensures equity in attendance records for students lacking timely access to technology.

- Barriers may prevent students from completing such an activity during standard school hours; however, engagement should occur each school day to ensure that the student meets the standards of attendance/engagement.

- Student attendance records default to “present.” Virtual Absences should be reported to administrators, who will utilize the Student Services Team (SST) to contact the family to support reengagement in learning.

- Clear, systemic communication about attendance and engagement is imperative. FCPS should ensure that all students and parents are well informed and understand the importance of student engagement in educational activities. Requirements for being considered “present” need to be clearly communicated and accessible to all students and parents.

Student Services Teams will review data regarding student engagement and support families to increase individual student engagement. Attendance secretaries will be provided access to Radar if manual entry into eSchoolplus is required.

Home/Hospital Instruction

Guidance for HHT during Continuity of Learning (COL) in the 2019/2020 school year was not provided by the CDC or MSDE. FCPS Regulation 400-37 addresses HHT services. A number of FCPS students continued to receive HHT services during COL. During blended or virtual learning:

- Students who are immunocompromised or live with someone who may be considered high risk must have documentation stating that attendance in the building is not medically in their best interest. Those students must be provided access to their education and HHT may be the best way for them to do so.

- As much as possible, HHT services will continue to be delivered in a virtual setting until all COVID-19 mandates have been lifted.

- Those who serve as HHT teachers are required to hold a bachelor’s degree (not a teaching certificate).

- To increase recruitment opportunities, it is recommended to pay contracted FCPS teachers who also serve as HHT teachers during the recovery period at a higher rate.

- One teacher can provide instruction for multiple students who are all enrolled in the same class.

- HHT recertification requirements for students may be waived by the supervisor/director during the recovery period.

- HHT teachers will create Schoology courses to use with HHT students. Schoology access must be provided to HHT teachers.

- HHT services will be delivered for students with an emotional or physical condition that impacts the student’s ability to attend school as certified by the corresponding medical provider.
Recertification requirements will be flexible so as not to expose immunocompromised students to a doctor’s visit.

**English Learners (EL)**

FCPS offers an EL program for students in grades pre-kindergarten through grade 12. Students are identified as EL based on a home language survey and an English proficiency screening assessment. FCPS currently supports over 3,000 EL students. All elementary schools have at least one EL teacher who provides EL services to students and EL case management. EL services at middle and high schools use a partial center-based model, with students at Ballenger Creek, Crestwood, Governor Thomas Johnson, Monocacy, and West Frederick middle schools receiving EL services at their home school. Middle school EL students at all other middle schools who opt in to the EL program attend West Frederick Middle School for EL services. Similarly, high school students at Frederick High, Governor Thomas Johnson High, and Tuscarora High receive EL services at their home school. Students from other high schools who opt in to the EL program attend Frederick High School. Secondary EL services will further expand to Walkersville Middle School and Walkersville High School beginning in the 2020/2021 school year.

In the virtual learning setting, FCPS is continuing to provide EL services to students at all levels. The goal of these services is to promote successful English language acquisition through concurrent language and content learning. The United States Department of Education outlined a fact sheet in providing services to English Learners during the COVID-19 Outbreak (Appendix H). The sections below offer a summary of the current approach to EL services employed by FCPS during COL.

**Elementary Level.** EL teachers work collaboratively with classroom teachers to recommend and create instructional materials as needed to maximize equitable access to grade-level content. In addition, EL teachers create linguistically differentiated standards-focused lessons to support Newcomers (students arriving to the country after July 1, 2020) and Entering level, English proficient students. EL teachers act as family liaisons to communicate instructional and school-based initiatives.

**Secondary Level.** EL teachers at the secondary level are continuing to support ELs in sheltered courses and co-teaching content classes. EL teachers craft virtual learning with the use of EL textbooks, content resources, and supplemental digital resources. Distance learning was designed and organized using a variety of tools, including the Schoology platform and Google classroom. Secondary teachers continue to provide EL students with asynchronous interactive instruction through use of ScreenCastify videos (teacher) and Flipgrid (students). Communication with students and families has been a challenge. Written communication with the Talking Points application was successful, but the opportunity for phone conversations to address questions or concerns was missing from the COL family-teacher partnership. Although concerted efforts were attempted to supply all families with a device for online learning, many families do not have internet access. Many of the “free” services being offered either require families to provide information they do not have or have a long waitlist. Families with health issues, as a result of COVID-19 infections, relied heavily on secondary-aged students to help with providing for the families’ physical and monetary needs. Families faced with lack of basic necessities (food and shelter) were unable to focus on COL. Teachers also found major misconceptions among EL populations regarding COL,
including that participation was optional; once students were not traveling to a school building some parents felt the school year was over.

Limited technological knowledge left families struggling as they attempted to troubleshoot connectivity or platform issues. This limitation hindered students’ ability to consistently connect to their virtual learning. The limited level of independence among pre-kindergarten through grade one learners required active parental support and guidance to connect to virtual learning in an asynchronous learning environment. Parents with limited formal education and limited English proficiency struggled to support students at an equitable rate commensurate with their English-speaking peers. When schools’ support teams sent out monolingual English messages, many EL families missed important information from schools. There are compliance considerations for English Learners. (Appendix I) Research in the area of integrated content and language instruction (Appendix J), and effective and appropriate feedback for English Learners (Appendix K) were used to determine the following recommendations:

- Maximize synchronous support and learning to increase student participation and access to learning materials. Beginning English Language Proficiency students (levels 1.0-2.8) will need more direct support from EL teachers and will need differentiated grade-level instruction and assignments for them to be active participants in a distance learning environment. Further, ELs require access to scaffolding, interaction, and comprehensible input for content and language learning; such supports are limited in an online learning environment. Schools must follow the guidelines presented by the United States Department of Education and ensure equitable access to learning in a digital environment by providing such scaffolds and supports in both in-person and online learning environments.
- Administer language placement assessments, as students return to school in a face-to-face environment. Provisional EL students will need to be given the language placement assessments to determine language level thus ensuring correct scheduling. Provide synchronous instruction and support whenever possible.
- Provide additional face-to-face and/or virtual opportunities for EL students.
- Allow for flexible scheduling options based on individual student needs (e.g., distance learning only, face to face, etc.).
- Provide direct services from EL teacher to Beginning English Language Proficiency students.
- Provide direct services from content teacher to Advanced English Language Proficiency students with additional support provided by EL teacher.
- Provide content and EL teachers common planning time to develop informed instruction, to the extent possible.
- Continue to provide EL accommodations to EL and Parent Refusal (PR) students, by purchasing word-to-word bilingual dictionaries for each student.
- Ensure the schedules for attendance are consistent so that families may plan accordingly.
- Ensure appropriate space and staff available to cover additional classrooms. Consider grouping EL students strategically to ensure access to EL supports during both in-person and distance learning days as schools with schools with high EL populations and how priority groups will impact space and class sizes.
- Consider procedures for students who arrive on their unassigned days at school.
• EL teachers will be allocated time to work directly with English learners in elementary grades to provide explicit language instruction and support.
• Enhance school-home communication via Townhall Google Meetings to include answering questions, help with technology supports, etc.

Upon return to Phase 3 (Traditional Learning Model):
• Ensure that all EL students have opportunities for re-teaching and acceleration as they return to school for regular instruction.
• Maintain some flexible scheduling options for students.
• Expand EL summer school options as some secondary EL students will require credit earning opportunities beyond the regular school year, especially if the number of courses available during the traditional year are limited.

Health Services

There are several ways in which FCPS can help protect students and staff and slow the spread of COVID-19 in the community as the school system plans to reopen schools. Specifically, “Schools can determine, in collaboration with state and local health officials to the extent possible, whether and how to implement these considerations while adjusting to meet the unique needs and circumstances of the local community” (CDC, 2020). The more people that enter a school and the longer they interact, the higher the risk of spreading COVID-19. As the school environment is typically full of social interactions between people in close proximity to one another, the risk of spreading COVID-19 is increased. Therefore, environmental factors and personal prevention practices recommended by the CDC and within the Maryland Recovery Plan for Education are detailed below for consideration by FCPS.

The decision points listed below for Phase 2 and Phase 3 are based on recommendations from the CDC’s Guidance for U.S. Healthcare Facilities (2020), CDC’s Considerations for Schools (2020), and the Maryland Together: Maryland’s Recovery Plan for Education COVID-19 Response and the Path Forward (2020). These recommendations are meant to supplement rather than replace any state or local health and safety laws and regulations that schools must comply with. There may be increased anxiety during this time as the school system prepares school staff, students, and parents/guardians for reopening. The school system in collaboration with local health officials may determine how to implement some of these decision points while meeting the needs of schools and their surrounding communities. The following are recommendations:
• Post signs in highly visible locations (e.g., school entrances, restrooms) that promote everyday protective measures and describe how to stop the spread of germs (such as by properly washing hands and properly wearing a cloth face covering).
• Provide basic information about COVID-19, including age appropriate information for students/staff. Topics for good hygiene practices include: handwashing, covering coughs and sneezes, staying home when ill, temperature monitoring.
• Identify protocol for health room staff assessing symptoms with minimum patient transition to prevent exposure to the building.
• Implement protocols requiring that sick students and staff stay home and provide requirements for a return to school/work.
• Establish health room and quarantine protocols for students who are ill versus routine health services, while maintaining discretion and confidentiality.
• Provide an isolated restroom, to the extent possible, for patients accessing the COVID-19 health room.
• Identify special population students and staff who require specialized Personal Protective Equipment (face shields, gloves, etc.) due to the need for closer proximity. Special population students include, but are not limited to: those who display high risk behaviors or may spit or bite, students who are deaf and hard of hearing, students accessing reading interventions, students with medical sensitivity, and students with sensory impairments.
• Train staff and students on the proper use of PPE.
• Establish protocols for scheduling health room visits and times for medication administration.
• Develop a flowchart regarding how to support individuals presenting COVID-19 symptoms. This should include procedures on isolation and exclusion from school buildings, as well as appropriate processes for return.
• Establish protocols regarding contact tracing, and train school nurses/administrators on these protocols.
• Notify appropriate health officials if student/staff is COVID-19 positive and follow appropriate notification or closure guidance.
• Teach and promote self-quarantine and social isolation from others if suspected exposure to COVID-19 or receipt of positive testing results for COVID-19.
• Require health services staff to wear PPE (mask/face shield) when working with all students.

Homeless Student Population

FCPS currently provides services to 838 students identified as homeless using the criteria established by the McKinney Vento (MV) Act and supported by FCPS Regulation 400-55 Homeless Students-Enrollment Procedures. The current economic impact felt by families during the COVID19 closure is expected to have additional impact on families as legislation, funding, and other supports come to an end entering the summer. There is potential for a significant increase in the number of students attending or enrolling in FCPS identified as homeless students. FCPS homeless students may exhibit or experience similar challenges in either Phase 2 or Phase 3 openings. The level of support required will be the same in either phase. The greatest barrier to students successfully navigating this scenario is school attendance. The most effective way to eliminate many resource and instructional needs is to encourage homeless students to attend on a daily basis with provisions to accommodate their learning, social, emotional, and physical needs. To effectively address the needs of homeless students in FCPS, consideration should be given to the following areas: (a) communication, (b) access to resources, (c) social-emotional support for students, and (d) training for staff. The following are recommendations:
• Develop communication plans for families to educate them regarding supports and services available to them.
• Provide additional face-to-face and/or virtual learning opportunities for homeless students.
• Provide access to digital learning tools and other tools necessary tools for instruction.
- Provide access to counseling and school health.
- Enhance community partnerships so that when FCPS locations are not available, partnerships can provide access to methods and locations to support instruction.
- Provide social-emotional learning and support for homeless students.
- Provide awareness and training for staff regarding impacts of homelessness on students’ attendance and performance.

Interventions

The Frederick County Public School intervention continuum offers services to students based on a multi-tiered system of supports. These supports begin with students receiving supplemental supports in the general education classroom, and based on need, students may require additional supplemental instruction in small groups or individually at varying levels of intensity in order to provide explicit instruction on content below grade level standards.

In a Phase 3 setting, with 100% capacity and a normal calendar and bell schedule, any student needing intervention can receive the appropriate level of support, and all interventions can be implemented with fidelity to the requirements outlined in the research-validated intervention programs (RVIPs) or individualized intervention plans (IIPs). However, in a Phase 2 setting, students will only receive in-person instruction 25% - 50% of each week, and the remainder of instruction will occur online. With this format, some interventions will be challenging to implement with fidelity, but intervention and general education teachers will collaborate to provide high-quality supplemental instruction to support students needing prerequisite skills in order to master grade-level content. Students receiving more intensive interventions will continue to receive in-person instruction and synchronous online instruction throughout the week to continue the frequency and intensity of these interventions. The following are phase 2 recommendations:

- Provide additional face-to-face and/or virtual learning opportunities for intervention students, to the extent possible at elementary and secondary schools.
- Students enrolled in structured literacy interventions will continue in these interventions with as much fidelity as possible. Students may need additional time to be taught an intervention that could exceed the FCPS allotted time for students in their grade. Structured Literacy Interventions need at least 40 additional minutes per day.
- Group students by intervention needs and not by grade level.
- Students in comprehension interventions will receive intervention as “supplemental” support to English/Language Arts (ELA) from an intervention teacher.
- Add a student information system field to document ELA supplemental instruction to identify students receiving support that does not meet the fidelity of the intervention.
- All elementary school math interventions will be guided by Individualized Intervention Plans (IIP). No Research Validated Intervention Program (RVIP) utilization would be permitted.
- Students enrolled in structured literacy interventions will continue in these interventions with as much fidelity as possible.
- Teachers with students in Read 180 who have tested into HD Word as a supplement will work with their literacy specialist to determine which of the two programs will be taught.
Students in Read 180 will receive their intervention as “supplemental” support to ELA from an intervention teacher.

Based on student need, schools will either offer modified Math Workshop courses or have intervention staff provide supplemental instruction support within the general math course.

Secondary teachers with students in yearlong English who have tested into HD Word as a supplement should work with their literacy specialist to determine which of the two programs will be taught.

Secondary students in yearlong ELA with Achieve 3000 support will receive their intervention as “supplemental” support to ELA from an intervention teacher.

Secondary Algebra 1 Acquisitions (A1A) class will utilize a modified Algebra 1A/1B curriculum map.

The following items are phase 3 recommendations:

- When all students return, consider what data should be reviewed to determine if intervention groupings should be shifted or assess the group to determine the intervention plan moving forward.
- Same as Phase 2, students receiving comprehension support should continue with that program with fidelity after assessment to determine placement within the program.
- Students receiving a foundational skills intervention should be assessed to determine placement in the program scope and sequence. Groups should be formed based on these assessments and the program should be continued with fidelity.
- The full offering of FCPS approved RVIP and FCPS developed IIP would be available for utilization.
- Secondary students receiving comprehension support from Read 180 should continue with that program with fidelity after assessment to determine placement within the program.
- Students receiving a structured literacy intervention should be assessed to determine placement in the program scope and sequence. Groups should be formed based on these assessments and the program should be continued with fidelity.
- Students would meet face to face on a daily basis with their classroom teacher as opposed to only a few days a week.

Special Education Services

The rights of students with disabilities to a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) and equal opportunity to educational services is mandated during the national health crisis. Throughout the school closure due to COVID-19, special educators, general educators and service providers have continued to create and deliver meaningful lessons and instructional activities for all students with disabilities and 504 Plans. FCPS will continue to provide a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) as required under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (Section 504), and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) to students with disabilities. Guidance provided by the United States Department of Education (March 2020) and Maryland State Department of Education, Division of Early Intervening and Special Education Services (Appendices L and M) were followed when considering the delivery of services, whether virtually, in a hybrid model, or face-to-face. FCPS will ensure that students with disabilities and 504 Plans have access to the general education curriculum with the services, supports, and appropriate accommodations identified on their IEPs or 504 Plans.
To the maximum extent possible, IEPs for students with disabilities and those with 504 Plans have continued to be implemented as indicated on students’ IEP or 504 Plan. School teams worked collaboratively with parents to determine which services need to be delivered face-to-face, and those services that can be delivered virtually. These decisions were made based on students’ IEP goals, instructional accommodations, supplemental aids and services, and transition plans. Special educators collaborated with general educators to ensure that IEP accommodations were implemented and available for all instructional and learning activities delivered to students. This process was also in place for students attending non-public placements. All FCPS and non-public schools collected data on goals and objectives, and entered progress for each student into the MD Online IEP (OIEP) at least on a quarterly basis. Parents were also provided suggestions on how their child’s 504 Plan accommodations can be implemented in the home environment. These accommodations in student 504 plans were implemented as indicated in students’ plans. Students who required related services (speech/language pathology, occupational therapy, counseling, etc.) received direct services from a special educator or service provider through telepractice. This face-to-face, virtual intervention helped to mitigate against students losing or stagnating in their acquired skills. For students requiring accommodations, adaptive computer software was provided. This software was provided not only for students receiving special education and 504 services, but for all FCPS students to support their individual virtual learning. Some of the adaptive computer software included Google Read/Write Extension, Equatio, word prediction software, screen enlargement, enlarged keyboards, and eye gaze technology among others. For students with significant and profound needs who utilized adaptive technologies within a typical school environment and day, these adaptive technologies were sent home with students to use. Teachers were also available to advise parents on the implementation and appropriate use of accommodations. Every effort was made to ensure students with disabilities and 504 Plans had appropriate software and access to technology. All students were provided with Chromebooks and, if they did not have access to the internet, hotspots were provided to families. All students, including students with disabilities, accessed their instruction through technology platforms. These platforms include the learning management software of Schoology and instruction is delivered synchronously through the Google Meet technology platform. These technology platforms allow for the cyber security and confidentiality of student information.

Students with IEPs who qualified for extended school year (ESY) received their instruction in a full virtual model from July 6 to July 30, 2020. Students had access to all technology and adaptive computer software in order to engage in extended school year services. Students’ individual education programs that incorporated distance learning services were implemented with fidelity.

FCPS provided face-to-face instruction for identified students during the month of August 2020. These students included those with IEPs and 504 plans. Additionally, several students who required delayed initial or reassessment were able to receive these assessments. Personal Protective Equipment was provided to staff to ensure the safety of students and staff. This PPE included face masks with a clear mouth section, face shields, plexi-glass desk shields, among others. At the beginning of the 2020-2021 school year, students who did not have internet access were able to access the school building for learning. Students with disabilities and 504 Plans were prioritized for face-to-face learning and instruction to occur by the second week of the school year, beginning the week of September 14. These services included those that could not be replicated in a virtual learning environment. Through the IEP
process, collaborative decisions will continue to be made with families on additional students accessing the school building for face-to-face instruction.

As all students with IEPs or 504 Plans receive instruction, whether virtually or in a hybrid model, instruction and learning activities are provided in a variety of ways, based on the individual needs of students. General and special education teachers, as well as related service providers meet consistently to discuss students’ progress, how to appropriately document this progress, and how services are delivered. For students new to a school building or program, transitioning supports, such as virtual or face-to-face transition tours, are scheduled for students with disabilities. Recovery services will need to be considered for every student with an IEP to determine the redress of learning during the 2019-2020 pandemic school closure and if additional services outside of the IEP are required for the student. All of these requirements increase the need for IEP and 504 meetings. These meetings will initially be held virtually to ensure the safety of all stakeholders. The technology platform for IEP and 504 meetings is Google Meet through the school system’s learning management system, Schoology. Increasingly, face-to-face IEP and 504 meetings will occur while maintaining health and safety requirements of PPE and social distancing.

**Parent Engagement.** It is important to continue developing, and improving relationships, and partnering with parents to support students during distance and hybrid learning, assessments, transition tours, developing the student’s instructional programming, and determining recovery services. To support families in FCPS joint work to meet the needs of students, the following should be considered:

- Inform parents often of the reopening plan segments specific to their children.
- Use a parent survey to gather data on areas where parents are struggling to support their child.
- Provide flexibility for due dates for assignments and accommodations for students to complete assignments.
- Continue with adjusted grading policies, as necessary and appropriate.
- Encourage parents to check grades regularly, provide the ability to receive messages and updates from Schoology, and offer training on available student supports and tools available to them as parents.

**Regulatory Mandates and Compliance Guidelines.** The federal government has upheld the current regulatory mandates outlined in the Individuals with Disability Education Act (IDEA) and the guidance provided by the Office of Civil Rights (OCR), thereby all regulatory timelines related to identification, assessment, and eligibility considerations are firm. To that end, the FCPS has approximately 500 students who have delayed assessment timelines due to the pandemic school closure. Some students require one assessment to be completed face-to-face in order to determine eligibility, others require two or more assessments to determine eligibility as well as the completion of child find and reevaluation expectations. The completion and review of these assessments to inform real time instructional programming plans is vital to developing student learning opportunities aligned to their present level of performance, thereby determining the services and supports currently needed as a result of the pandemic school closure.

**Assessments.** Assessments for the purposes of initial eligibility and reevaluation that were delayed due to the school closure will be completed in a manner that is consistent with the health and safety needs
Assessments will be prioritized based upon the order of consent given and the testing timeline requirements. The following are recommendations:

- Schedule assessments over the summer when building occupancy restrictions are lifted.
- Work through the necessary logistics of completing assessments, and refine the protocol for bringing students into the building and managing testing materials.
- Begin administering delayed assessments at satellite locations where FCPS health and safety precautions have been implemented.
- Work closely with administrators and custodial staff in these buildings to clean and disinfect before and after the testing of each student.
- Implement the use of arena testing with expected safety and health protocols so that multiple providers are in one location and can compile data together (e.g. observation of Pre-K student playing on playground with the special educator, occupational therapist, and school psychologist observing simultaneously to complete portions of assessment at the same time while maintaining health and safety precautions such as social distancing).
- Schedule individual appointments with families to bring their students to the testing location.
- Use plexiglass shields or face shields between the assessor and student (dependent on the individual student or assessment needed) to create a barrier.
- Include the statement on all assessments that additional data can/should be compiled upon return to face-to-face instruction so that educational planning can be enhanced.
- Consider assessment to be completed at home school for families and students who are interested in their child being assessed in a familiar location with familiar staff.
- For students who are unable to be assessed face-to-face, FCPS will consider the use of Alternatives for Virtual Assessments (Appendix N) to collect data via Google Meet or another approved virtual platform.
- In order to meet the criteria for proper transition assessments, staff established more digital options for teachers to obtain information for transition planning purposes. Additional digital options for transition assessments as well as more technology for students in the Learning for Life Program will be provided.

**Transition Tours.** Students with disabilities have been away from their previously experienced structures, services and routines at their school. Many students with IEPs are transitioning between schools, specialized programs, and levels, and require the opportunity to participate in school tours to be acclimated to the health and safety precautions they will experience, establish or reestablish relationships with service providers, dispel anxiety by providing student specific access accommodations and supports, and learn the layout of their new school. Transition tours will be established and organized with families and school-based staff to ensure health and safety measures are in place and the student can become acclimated to his/her stage of instruction, especially in phase 2 and phase 3 of the reopening options.

**IEP/504 Meetings.** FCPS held multiple IEP and 504 meetings during the 2019/2020 pandemic school closure in a virtual venue and have been refining their expertise and skill set to facilitate such practices in a totally virtual setting. FCPS received positive feedback from families regarding virtual IEP and 504 meetings. Families have shared that the meetings are more convenient and allow for social distancing. IEP meetings and 504 meetings will occur to the extent possible virtually, with the exception of those
families who may require face-to-face IEP or 504 meetings face-to-face, such as families who are deaf and hard of hearing. The following are recommendations:

- Convene IEP/504 meetings virtually over the summer, and even into partial reopening, in order to maintain health and safety guidelines for staff and families.
- Reschedule IEP/504 meetings over the summer if parents are interested. Compensate 10-month staff that participate.
- Allow for face-to-face IEP/504 meetings for some families, if this increases accessibility for parents. Child Find screening meetings include the child so a screening and an initial observation can occur during the meeting in order to help inform the decision making about whether testing is needed or not. Observing such young children virtually is a challenge. During face-to-face meetings:
  - Use a larger conference room or classroom to maintain distance between participants.
  - Provide individual pens for each participant, which are collected and cleaned at the end of the IEP meeting.
  - Provide clear masks or face shields for interpreters.
  - Work with custodial staff to ensure cleaning of all surfaces both before and after each meeting.

Additional Considerations:

- Regardless of the instructional phase of reopening, the special education staffing and redeployment model will need to be re-evaluated in alignment with the phase of reopening.
- The individual needs (learning, medical, physical) of students must be considered when planning for and scheduling to ensure learning needs of students are met.
- Special Education Instructional Assistants (SEIAs) have been an integral part of the support for students with disabilities in the virtual learning environment. They will continue to support students learning, whether virtual or face-to-face.
- To the maximum extent possible, staff must ensure instructional consistency and routines for students with disabilities, particularly those students assigned to specialized programs.
- To the maximum extent possible, students must continue to access learning with their typical peers.
- Some students, due to medical needs, may continue accessing learning through virtual learning. These students may need to receive Home Hospital Teaching.
- Students on hybrid schedules may also need to be instructed by multiple teachers and service providers on days when they are learning virtually due to increased caseload management responsibilities.
- School teams should consider ways to staff a virtual resource room in order to afford students with special needs greater access to instructional staff and support.

**Recovery Services.** Recovery services are additional services provided to students in acknowledgment that the COVID-19 pandemic may have resulted in unique challenges for students with disabilities, thereby resulting in learning loss. FCPS recognizes that students receiving special education and related services may benefit from additional instruction to support the educational impact resulting from the COVID-19 school closure. Recovery services are in addition to and supplement active IEP services;
therefore, may need to be provided outside of the typical school day (e.g. before or after school). Guidance is provided from the MSDE on determining recovery services for students with disabilities. (Appendix O).

School teams will determine the need for recovery services and implement those services within one year of determination. The consideration of recovery services may need to be revisited multiple times dependent upon the phase of school reopening. The recovery service determination process is driven by the needs of the individual student and determined in collaboration with the parent/guardian, case manager, and essential members of the IEP team.

It is noted that providing recovery services will have staffing and budgetary implications. Staff will be recruited and hired to work beyond their work-year contract. Providing services for students beyond the school day and typical school year will result in additional expenditures for staffing, resources and materials.

FCPS will consider recovery services for each and every child through the IEP process. FCPS will utilize the below list to prioritize recovery services through the IEP process:

1. Students with moderate to significant disabilities in specialized programs whose distance learning was vastly different than their active IEP services when in brick and mortar,
2. Students requiring face-to-face assessments as a part of a delayed eligibility process,
3. Students that have a disability and also may be English Learners or who participate in reading interventions to address goals and objectives on their IEP,
4. Students who are significantly medically fragile should be considered in the order of implementation of recovery services when the face-to-face services yield outcomes that are safe for the medically fragile students' return, and
5. The remainder of students with IEPs then will require IEP meetings to determine recovery services once the previous students have been prioritized.

The following are recommendations:

- Students who have more significant disabilities, including those in specialized programs (e.g. autism, intellectual impairment) benefit from attending school in person as much as possible to re-establish a routine. These students will be prioritized to have the maximized face-to-face learning upon reopening.
- Students who are medically fragile (e.g. Rock Creek and students with disabilities who are immunocompromised) need additional time at home, continuing with distance learning with an assigned home hospital teacher (HHT) until such time when there is stability in the safety recommendations set forth by the CDC.
- Staff should monitor the health status of students who are medically fragile or immunocompromised. Health status monitoring includes temperature checks and observation for sweating, coughing, expression of pain, etc. This is important for students that are nonverbal and/or non-ambulatory and cannot readily communicate their wants and needs.
- Students with disabilities that manifest with significant anxiety prefer remote distance learning and have demonstrated successful learning when they do not need to navigate the
uncomfortable social world of peers in a face-to-face environment (e.g. autism, emotional disability). Students in this category will have access to distance learning to the extent appropriate for their individual needs.

- FCPS students in nonpublic schools will receive instruction from nonpublic service providers through distance learning and hybrid models of face-to-face and distance learning in July and August. Special Transportation will be arranged as indicated in the IEP, as warranted.

**Reopening: Social Distancing.** According to CDC Guidelines, FCPS must teach and reinforce the following: (a) remaining a minimum of 6 feet away from other individuals (b) washing hands for at least 20 seconds, and (c) practicing proper health hygiene behaviors. Signs that promote these guidelines will be posted in highly visible locations. Students and staff should avoid touching their eyes, nose and mouth. Students that have difficulties breathing or cannot physically remove a face covering should not wear one. The following are personal protective equipment (PPE) recommendations:

- Provide appropriate PPE for all staff so they can be within 6 feet of students. When working with students with disabilities, close, and often physical, contact with students is required.
- Provide PPE face coverings in the form of face shields to service providers, including general and special educators, related service providers and support staff (e.g. SEIAs and interpreters) of students with disabilities. Face shields allow for the students with disabilities (e.g. deaf and hard of hearing students, those with sensory impairments, students accessing reading intervention, students with behavioral difficulties, etc.) to see the full facial expressions and vocalizations of the provider, as well as interaction among peers.
- Provide clear masks or face shields for students who are still learning a functional communication system (e.g. students in specialized programs).
- Provide instruction for all staff working with students and students on how and why face covering/wearing a mask is important.
- Schedule short “mask breaks” for students to remove masks at certain intervals and access outdoor space for instruction, weather permitting, to help with compliance and any sensory needs.
- Collaborate with parents about how to best prepare their child(ren) for returning to the school building (social stories, practice wearing a mask at home, etc.). This is necessary for students in order to minimize their anxiety and stress.
- Recommend implementation of proactive behavior positive reinforcement, restorative practices, and exhaust all non-hands-on de-escalation techniques prior to determining implementation of restraint and/or seclusion in the case of serious and imminent threat of safety of student or others.

**Classroom**

- Carefully consider classroom occupancy, including students and instructional service providers in specialized programs, given the size of the classroom space and the number of instructional service providers and students to maintain appropriate and safe social distancing. Scheduling of itinerant related service providers will be strategic to minimize unsafe classroom occupancy.
- Develop specific protocols for scheduling the use and cleaning of the sensory room. Provide clear delineation of what are the responsibilities of classroom staff, versus custodial staff.
• Review and revise seclusion room and restraint protocols to maintain the additional safety guidelines set forth by the CDC. Student behaviors manifest in such a way that hands-on proximity is required and will need to be maintained related to safety (hands-on may be needed).
• Establish bathroom schedules (class A, the first 15 minutes of a period, class B the second 15 minutes, etc.) to minimize contact in a small space. Some students require 1:1 adult support for bathroom protocols and safety measures must be followed.

**Students Who Are Deaf and Hard of Hearing.** Students who are deaf and hard of hearing will require an increased focus on instructional practices in the phased models of reopening to ensure equitable access, as outlined in the following recommendations:

• Captioning and Picture-in-Picture Interpreting for students who are deaf and hard of hearing will be provided. Given the increased volume, teachers will be required to submit requests to the Office of Interpreting Services in a timely manner, allowing for 24-48 hours to secure appropriate staff and formatting of materials.
• Learning activities through distance learning lessons need enhanced sound, captioning or interpreting based on each student’s need. Additional technology may be used for these purposes. Alternative activities and trouble-shooting support will be needed for students continuing in distance learning should these accessibility features be unavailable.
• For students utilizing FM equipment (wireless assistive hearing devices) which travel between classes, more frequent cleaning will be required. Staff will wear gloves when handling the shared devices and clean them prior to passing to the next staff member.

**Students with Visual Impairments.** Students who are visually impaired will require an increased focus on instructional practices in the phased models of reopening to ensure equitable access, as outlined in the following recommendations:

• Braille readers and enlarged print materials for visually impaired students will need to remain with individual students to mitigate against the spreading of germs.
• All community-based instruction including travel training, orientation and mobility should follow the proper safety precautions based on the type of transportation (FCPS bus or public) and destination, while providing meaningful experiences for students.

**Addressing Student Needs versus Requirements for Compliance.** Now more than ever, emotional stability and feelings of safety can increase academic achievement. Teachers use academic work to help support emotional needs and focus on the whole child. Students will need to be supported socially and emotionally, while staff will also attend to their overall well-being with curriculum implementation and compliance rules. Guidance is provided through research that focuses on preparing online teachers to work with special needs students *(Appendix P).*

**Special Transportation.** As part of a student’s IEP, transportation may be a service required to be provided under Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). Given social distancing guidelines, modified bus scheduling will be required for students to be safely transported to school. The regulation for transportation for students, 200-13 will need to be revisited. Additional recommendations include:

• Students are allowed one student per seat on the bus. Siblings may be allowed to sit together.
• Masks/face shields are required for staff, and recommended for students. However, the health needs of students may prevent some students from wearing them.
• Transportation staff must strictly adhere to cleaning and disinfecting protocols. Buses should be disinfected between routes.
• Drivers and assistants will be trained on PPE requirements such as the use of face masks, face shields and gloves.
• Face shields may be required for some bus staff (assistants) when supporting the transportation of students with highly vulnerable medical or behavioral needs.
• Training may be required for some students riding the bus in order to educate them on social distancing and safe health practices when riding the school bus.
• Students with an IEP should have their special transportation decision reconsidered through the IEP process. The MSDE provided guidance in the form of a flow chart about determining transportation of students with disabilities since the pandemic school closure (Appendix Q).

Adapted Physical Education Direct Services. Students receiving direct adapted physical education (PE) services will require an increased focus on instructional practices in the phased models of reopening to ensure equitable access, as outlined in the following recommendations:

• Adapted PE has shared equipment that needs frequent cleaning.
• Ongoing distance learning or hybrid model will require IEP/504 teams to determine how adapted physical education services will be delivered (following the IEP/504 when face to face and the DLP when at home or another variation).
• Use “substitute” funds along with FCPS CARES funding for services needed to assist with recovery services, purchasing of additional smocks, face shields and gloves to provide protection during hands-on therapeutic services.
• Provide as much therapy as possible in the classroom thus reducing the need to occupy another space (increasing cleaning) by scheduling sessions during group or cooperative learning activities.
• Avoid having students use therapist-provided supplies and equipment (which may need to travel between schools).
• Use tele-therapy in conjunction with face-to-face sessions to provide services to students working on similar goals and who may not be attending school on the same days so they can be seen at the same time.
• Work hours for part time staff should be determined to best meet the needs of students (e.g., staff working 0.5 FTE may need to work five half days, Monday through Friday, rather than 2.5 days or two full days and one-half day).

Special Education Related Services. Related service providers include staff such as speech/language pathologists, occupational and physical therapists, vision, hearing, and other itinerant services. County Occupational and Physical Therapy Staff are considered itinerant staff. Modified school schedules will have an impact on the ability to provide general service provisions. Typical services often require hands-on therapeutic intervention and close proximity with students. These staff include; occupational therapists (OT), physical therapists (PT), teacher of Visually Impaired, teacher of deaf and hard of hearing. Ongoing DL or a hybrid model will require IEP/504 teams to determine how services will be delivered (following the IEP/504 when face to face and the DLP when at home or another variation). Most, if not all related service providers are 10-month employees which significantly impacts the ability to provide
related services year-round for students. As such, there are unique considerations for scheduling and delivering related services for students. The following are recommendations:

- Use “substitute” funds along with FCPS CARES funding for services needed to assist with recovery services, purchasing of additional smocks, face shields and gloves to provide protection during hands-on therapeutic services.
- Provide as much therapy as possible in the classroom thus reducing the need to occupy another space (increasing cleaning) by scheduling sessions during group or cooperative learning activities.
- Avoid having students use therapist-provided supplies and equipment (which may need to travel between schools).
- Use tele-therapy in conjunction with face-to-face sessions to provide services to students working on similar goals and who may not be attending school on the same days so they can be seen at the same time.
- Work hours for part time staff should be determined to best meet the needs of students (e.g., staff working 0.5 FTE may need to work five half days, Monday through Friday, rather than 2.5 days or two full days and one-half day).
Logistics

Building Cleaning and Disinfecting

The health and safety of FCPS students and staff is a top priority, both as one of the Board of Education’s aspirational goals, and now to an even greater extent in light of the current pandemic. In March, custodial teams performed a thorough cleaning and disinfecting of school buildings. When instruction resumes, all school buildings will continue receiving daily cleaning and disinfecting, with special emphasis placed on the repeated treatment of frequently-touched surfaces throughout the school day.

FCPS will continue to make every effort to abide by the recommendations put forth by the CDC, and to satisfy the requirements disseminated by MSDE. In response to current conditions and recommendations, FCPS is providing staff with additional supplies that are necessary to support the recommended cleaning and disinfecting. The disinfectant currently used by FCPS is an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) approved disinfectant against COVID-19, and it remains readily available to all custodial staff. FCPS purchased and await delivery of supplemental custodial equipment that will allow for wider, and more efficient, application of cleaners and disinfectant.

The physical absence of students in the school building on Wednesdays in the Hybrid Model will allow time for custodial teams to clean and disinfect in preparation for the second cohort’s arrival on Thursday. Cleaning and disinfecting will occur Friday evening in preparation for the first cohort’s arrival on Monday. If necessary, cleaning and disinfecting will be scheduled over the weekend. FCPS has a dedicated and well-trained cadre of custodial professionals. They have repeatedly demonstrated their talent during all manner of emergencies and are ready to fulfill their role in resuming and sustaining safe building occupancy and operation.

Custodial Cleaning. The CDC’s Considerations for Schools recommends increased cleaning and disinfecting for frequently touched surfaces. The custodial team’s work shifts will be adjusted to increase the number of custodial staff on-duty during the school day. The additional staff member’s shift would be scheduled to begin coinciding with student arrival. This individual will assist with increased cleaning and disinfection of frequently-touched surfaces while students are present.

To facilitate efficient disinfection, each school will receive one (1) electrostatic backpack sprayer, and each secondary school will receive one (1) misting (or “fogger”) machine to facilitate the disinfecting in large areas, including physical education and athletic spaces. Note: Despite attempts to expedite, all units may not be available until October – December of 2020.

FCPS Custodial Services Office will provide each school’s custodial team with professional learning and written direction on increased, routine cleaning and disinfection. Instructions will focus on frequently-touched areas, such as door handles, faucets, sinks, stair rails, and drinking water fountains. Custodial Services will ensure adequate provision and distribution of cleaning supplies, such as hand soap, microfiber cloths, paper towels, EPA approved disinfectant and Green-Seal certified.
Staff Cleaning Supplies. The CDC’s *Considerations for Schools* recommends the cleaning of frequently-touched surfaces. Each classroom will be supplied with a spray bottle of an approved solution and microfiber cleaning cloths that will be replaced daily and laundered in the vendor’s industrial washing process. The provision of these items is in response to FCTA’s request for making such supplies more widely available to instructional staff. Custodians will focus on frequently touched surfaces, and the availability of products for instructional staff is intended to support their request and is not a directive to clean classrooms or equipment.

Cleaning and Disinfecting the Building or Area if Someone is Sick. If a student or staff member becomes sick while in the building, or if a person who has been working in the building tests positive for COVID-19, the following actions will be taken.

- The areas used by the person(s) will be closed off immediately and air circulation will be increased in the area.
- Wait 24 hours before cleaning or disinfecting the main working space occupied by the person who is sick. If 24 hours is not feasible, wait as long as possible.
- Clean and disinfect all areas used by the person who is sick, such as offices, bathrooms, common areas, shared electronic equipment like tablets, touch screens, keyboards, and remote controls.
- Vacuum the space if needed with a vacuum that has a high-efficiency particular air (HEPA) filter, if available. Rooms will not be vacuumed if there are people in it. Wait until the room or space is empty to vacuum, such as at night, for common spaces, or during the day, for private rooms.
- While vacuuming, consider temporarily turning off room fans and the central HVAC system that services the room or space, so that particles that escape from vacuuming will not circulate throughout the facility.
- Once an area has been appropriately disinfected, it can be opened for use.
- Staff without close contact with the person who is sick can return to work immediately after disinfection.
- If more than 7 days have elapsed since the person who is sick visited or used the building, additional cleaning and disinfection is not necessary.

CTE and Shared Equipment. CTE and shared equipment and spaces will receive routine cleaning and disinfection. CTE staff will help to ensure that any equipment or supplies that students share will be cleaned in-between uses. Where shared items cannot be expected to receive such cleaning and disinfecting, students will be provided disposable gloves and aprons for added precaution, if feasible and safe.

Facility Enhancements and Modifications

The focus on facility enhancements is centered around operational changes in each building and does not include construction of new spaces. The operational changes are intended to support the instructional needs and facilitate a safe and healthy learning environment. Enhancements include modifications such as classroom layouts, increased supply inventory, ventilation changes, and facility use.

Ventilation. Maintenance will consider all modifications that can reasonably increase the delivery of clean air and dilute potential contaminants in school buildings. Maintenance will modify the ventilation schedules to bring in more outside air, to be accomplished by starting the occupied mode two hours prior to staff arrival and continue through the end of the school day. Staff may not open doors and windows for
increased ventilation, due to security and health concerns. Maintenance will procure and install increased air filtration as high as possible without significantly diminishing design airflow. Staff will continue to consult the guidelines for schools recommended by the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE) in response to COVID-19. It is important to note that not all steps are applicable for all scenarios, and maintenance will ensure ventilation systems operate properly and provide acceptable indoor air quality for the current occupancy level for each space.

**Protective Barriers.** Each school front office will be provided with two clear, desktop shields that will provide a barrier between the school secretaries and office visitors. FCPS will restrict the number of front-office visitors, but recognizes that there are situations in which front office staff will need to interact with staff, students, and visitors.

Schools will provide and place a table in the security vestibule (or main-entry hallway, if no vestibule exists) to facilitate transfer of items without visitors needing to enter the main office. This table will be used by parents to drop-off or pick up items to be transferred between the parent and student, or parent and school staff. The school will print and affix a sign to the table to promote effective use of this process.

**Playgrounds.** Playgrounds will open for use during the school day by students. After recess, students will wash hands prior to returning to the classroom. This guidance could change throughout the school year and will be done in coordination with the Frederick County Health Department and guidance offered by the Frederick County Division of Parks and Recreation.

**Lockers.** Lockers will not be used, and will be secured shut because students cannot access lockers while observing social distancing. Elementary school cubbies will also not be used for the same reason. Students will place items by their assigned workstations during the school day, and will not leave any items/articles behind when their workspace will subsequently be occupied by another student. With one-half of the students present, and given that the student mobility during the day will be limited, there will be sufficient classroom space (adjacent to the students seating area) to accommodate student belongings.

**Classroom Modifications**

The configuration of each school classroom will ensure that social distancing can be maintained to support 50% of the student population. Both the *Maryland Recovery Plan for Education* and the CDC’s *Considerations for Schools* recommends that student seating, whether at desks or tables, be at least 6 feet apart, and facing in the same direction. Under this general direction, each school administrator and custodial team will implement the necessary changes and identify areas to temporarily store any excess furniture. Classroom arrangements will not be configured in a typical format because of social distancing requirements. Sample classroom layouts have been developed to provide to schools.

**Hand Sanitizer**

Prior to COVID-19, FCPS and other school systems used non-alcohol-based hand sanitizer. The CDC’s Consideration for Schools recommends that if soap and water are not readily available, hand sanitizer
that contains at least 60% alcohol can be used for staff and children who can safely use it. With permission from the State Fire Marshall, FCPS will obtain and install an additional 1,800 dispensers to extend the current installation of alcohol-based sanitizer to every classroom. Hand washing is still the preferred method of cleaning hands, but hand sanitizer is available for when hand washing is not possible.

**Transportation of Students**

The *Maryland Recovery Plan for Education* and the CDC recommend that students be limited to one person per seat maximum, and that additional ventilation and the wearing of face coverings by both employees and students be used to further mitigate the spread of the virus. Therefore, buses will be limited to one student per seat, for a total of 22 students per bus. Ventilation will be increased by utilizing the roof hatches and windows. When possible, loading and unloading students in a manner that encourages social distancing (load back to front and unload front to back) will be utilized.

**Face Coverings on Buses.** Students will be required to wear a face covering on the bus. FCPS will make face coverings available for students who need them. Drivers are required to wear face coverings during loading and unloading of students, and during any interactions where social distancing cannot be maintained. Drivers may remove their face covering while driving if they feel it causes a safety concern, but it is recommended that face coverings be worn as much as possible while students are on the bus.

**Bus Cleaning.** The *Maryland Recovery Plan for Education* requires increased cleaning and disinfection for buses. Each driver will be provided a spray bottle filled with an EPA approved disinfectant and cleaning cloths. Bus drivers will clean their buses after morning and afternoon routes using the provided cleaning products. Special cleaning emphasis is placed on seats, handles/railing, and window controls. If a student or staff member has a confirmed exposure to COVID-19, the bus should be immediately taken out of service for cleaning and disinfecting prior to being placed back into service. Additional routine cleaning schedules may be necessary as Federal/State/Local guidance is modified.

**Bus Inspections.** Prior to transporting students, buses will be inspected in accordance to MVA and COMAR regulations related to school vehicle standards. Drivers will continue to conduct their pre-trip inspections at the beginning of their run. During this inspection, the bus driver checks the entire school bus outside and inside to ensure the bus is in safe working order to transport students. All drivers and assistants are required to clean the interior of the bus, including all safety equipment daily. The daily inspections and increased cleaning and disinfecting helps maintain a healthy environment for students and staff.

**Driver Training.** All drivers will attend a mandatory in-service meeting/training before students return to school. The training will include proper cleaning and disinfecting procedures, safety protocols, and seating configurations. In addition, the following courses related to COVID-19 require completion by each driver.

- Coronavirus Awareness
- Coronavirus CDC Guidelines Cloth Mask
- Coronavirus Cleaning your Workplace
Building Access and Pedestrian Flow

Pedestrian traffic-flow control measures for each school will not be modified significantly, because the current access procedures support staff’s ability to monitor and enforce social distancing protocols. School administrators and custodians have been provided CDC and MSDE guidelines to support modifications to internal traffic flow, if possible. Each school will be able to modify traffic flow, if necessary, to meet the unique needs of their site and community.

Student Movement

At the start of each school year, learning expectations and rules are explained to students. Social distancing will be emphasized as part of this new norm. Staff and students have been practicing social distancing for several months and site-specific adjustments will be made based on the needs of each school community. Student movement will be limited to the greatest extent possible within buildings during the day. When movement of students occurs, staff will require social distancing and the use of face coverings.

Student Arrival and Dismissal

The use of multiple entrances and exits will continue in schools to support social distancing efforts. Large gatherings of students will be limited at the beginning and end of the day. Students will move to classrooms, or other designated areas, for arrival and dismissal to maintain smaller groups of students. Arrival and dismissal locations and/or times may need to be staggered and adjusted, or protocols will be in place to adhere to social distancing when parents or caregivers are dropping off students. Since some schools do not have a separate entrance for buses and cars at arrival time or dismissal, parents may be asked to wait until after dismissal to pick up students or park off property to meet their student. Students who walk to school will be reminded of the importance of maintaining physical distancing when walking to and from school and the wearing of a face covering when within six feet of other people.

Signage

Signage compliant with CDC standards will be placed throughout each school to educate and reinforce handwashing, social distancing, the wearing of face coverings, and self-screening of COVID-19 symptoms. The CDC’s Considerations for Schools recommends posting highly-visible signs to promote everyday protective measures and to describe how to stop the spread of germs. Food Service staff will post signs in cafeterias to support social distancing and limit the number of students gathered in one area.

Health Room Protocols

Modified health room protocols are being coordinated with the Frederick County Health Department (FCHD), which provides nurses to each of our schools. The school nurses will take health direction from the FCHD medical officer for response protocols for COVID-19. Appropriate personal protective equipment is being coordinated with the FCHD and FCPS Health Services Specialist. Strategies to reduce
traffic to the health room will be implemented with school staff and FCHD nurses. For example, minor discomforts and minor abrasions can be addressed in the classroom and coordination is required prior to sending students to the health rooms for non-emergencies. Guidance is also being coordinated with health officials statewide and MSDE, and the FCPS Health Services Specialist is a participant on the statewide committee.

**Health Suite Air Purification.** Each health room has been provided with a standalone air purification unit that employs an ultraviolet germicidal lamp and two levels of air filtration. FCPS has upgraded the air filter media in other areas of the building, where feasible, and will be scheduling the ventilation cycle to begin a full two-hours prior to daily occupancy. For COVID-19, the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE) recommends such air purification devices for high-risk spaces. The Maintenance Department has purchased these devices, they are installed, and they are serviced regularly.

**Health Suite Isolation Space.** Schools will identify space in close proximity to the current health room for the isolation of individuals exhibiting symptoms of illness. Maryland’s Recovery Plan for Education requires that schools immediately separate staff and children with COVID-19 symptoms at school. In some cases, the Health Suite may be used for isolation, and another space will be used for conventional, or “well care,” health services.

**Health Screening and Protocols**

The CDC offers several methods to facilitate student and staff protection. The most protective methods incorporate social distancing (maintaining a distance of 6 feet from others) and the use of face coverings. Self-identification of symptoms is also critically important and is integral to maintain a healthy school environment. The entire school community must partner in this effort. Employees are encouraged to stay home when they are sick or not feeling well. Parents are also encouraged to follow these same protocols for their students. When there is a doubt about an illness, staff and students are encouraged to stay home and contact their health care provider.

**Staff Screening.** All staff will be passively screened, and by swiping their badge and entering the building they are acknowledging that:

a) They have **not** tested positive for COVID-19 in the last 10 days, or in the last 14 days had any close (less than 6 feet), prolonged contact (more than 15 minutes) with anyone who is either confirmed or suspected of being infected with COVID-19, including anyone who meets the criteria for a person experiencing COVID-19-like-Illness (CLI), listed in item ‘b’ below; AND

b) They do **not** currently experience or display, and have **not** in the last 10 days met the criteria for a person experiencing CLI:
   - Any 1 of the following: cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, new loss of taste or smell; **OR**
   - At least 2 of the following:
     - Fever of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit (38 Celsius) or higher
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Headache
- Fatigue, muscle aches, chills, shivering (shaking chills), or
- Gastrointestinal symptoms (nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea).

If staff are experiencing any of these circumstances, they are not allowed to enter the building.

**Student Screening.** Parents will be provided the same information about COVID-19 symptoms and affirm that by sending their student to school, they are acknowledging their students are symptom free. School administrators will disseminate and collect written acknowledgment of this requirement. FCPS will establish and disseminate clear “return to school” procedures, in which sick staff members or students should not return until they have met CDC’s criteria to discontinue home isolation.

**Face Coverings in the School Building**

Staff and students are expected to wear face coverings while in the school building, and most especially, when social distancing cannot be maintained. Staff must wear face coverings at all times when supervising students and will teach and reinforce the use of face coverings with their students. Staff and students are authorized to use their own face coverings, but FCPS will provide them if students or staff do not want to bring their own. Students should be frequently reminded not to touch the face covering and to wash their hands often. Face coverings are different than masks that FCPS may provide to select job classes when masks are required to perform specific FCPS assigned work (i.e. changing filters, use of certain products/solvents to perform custodial or maintenance work). Face shields will be provided to staff who must work in close proximity to students and where viewing the face is beneficial (e.g. language instruction, working with students with special education needs, etc.). Face coverings are a critical preventive measure and are most essential in times when social distancing is difficult. Face coverings should be used in addition to other measures to reduce the risk of COVID-19 spread, including social distancing and frequent hand washing.

It is recognized that wearing cloth face coverings may not be possible in every situation or for some people. In some situations, wearing a cloth face covering may exacerbate a physical or mental health condition, lead to a medical emergency, or introduce significant safety concerns. Face coverings should not be worn by children under 2 years of age, and anyone who has trouble breathing or is unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove a face covering without assistance. Adaptations and alternatives can be considered whenever possible to increase the feasibility of wearing a cloth face covering or to reduce the risk of COVID-19 spreading if it is not possible to wear one. For example, some students with intellectual and developmental disabilities, mental health conditions, or other sensory sensitivities, may have challenges wearing a face covering. In cases such as this, concerns about the use of a face covering should be addressed with an individual’s healthcare provider. Additionally, scheduling breathing breaks (time to temporarily remove the face covering) in a safe space may be helpful to support students and staff who are wearing a face covering for an extended period of time.
Response to a Laboratory Confirmed Case of COVID-19 and Persons with COVID-19-Like Illness in Schools

Definitions

COVID-Like-Illness: A person who is experiencing the following symptoms meets the criteria for COVID-Like-Illness:
1. New onset of cough or shortness of breath; or
2. At least 2 of the following: fever of 100.4 or greater, chills, shivering, muscle pain, sore throat, headache, loss of sense of taste or smell, or gastrointestinal symptoms (nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea).

Quarantine: Used to keep someone who might have been exposed to COVID-19 away from others. Quarantine helps prevent spread of disease that can occur before a person knows they are sick or if they are infected with the virus without feeling symptoms. People in quarantine should stay home, separate themselves from others, monitor their health, and follow directions from their state or local health department. Quarantine If You Might Be Sick

Isolation: Used to separate people infected with SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, from people who are not infected. People who are in isolation should stay home until it’s safe for them to be around others. In the home, anyone sick or infected should separate themselves from others by staying in a specific “sick room” or area and using a separate bathroom (if available). Isolate If You Are Sick

Close Contact: Being within 6 feet of another person for 15 minutes or greater is considered close contact when considering contact with individuals diagnosed with COVID-19 or COVID-19-Like-Illness

Contact Tracing: Used by health departments to prevent the spread of infectious disease. In general, contact tracing involves identifying people who have an infectious disease (cases) and people who they came in contact with (contacts) and working with them to interrupt disease spread. This includes asking people with COVID-19 to isolate and their contacts to quarantine at home voluntarily. COVID-19 Contact Tracing

Procedures for a potential or confirmed COVID-19 infection are developed and updated in coordination with the FCHD.

- Schools administrators and staff will communicate and reinforce with staff and families the following expectations:
  1. Students and staff will stay home if they have symptoms of COVID-19-Like-Illness, have been diagnosed with COVID-19, or have been tested and are waiting for test results.
  2. Students and staff will stay home if they have been in close contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 or has symptoms of COVID-Like-Illness during the previous 14 days.
- When a student reports or exhibits symptoms of COVID-19-Like Illness at school, health room staff should be notified immediately, and the student will report to the school health room where the HRT, LPN, or Registered School Nurse will review the student’s symptoms in the designated isolation space.
- School health staff will contact the parent/guardian, or emergency contact of the student and request the student be picked up as quickly as possible. School health staff will communicate with the parent/guardian about suggested follow up with a health care provider and/or options
for COVID-19 testing as well as recommendations for home isolation.

- The Registered School Nurse and the School Principal will collaborate to ensure appropriate information is confidentially shared with FCHD, the FCPS Health Services Specialist, and others with a need to know.
- If a staff member exhibits or reports symptoms of COVID-19-Like Illness at school, they should notify their supervisor and go home or to seek medical follow up. If the staff member must wait to be picked up from school, they should report to the designated isolation area following notification of school health staff.

The Maryland Department of Health provides a framework for how to respond to a student or staff member who has been diagnosed with COVID-19, reports or exhibits symptoms of a COVID-19-Like Illness or who has had close contact with someone with a person diagnosed with COVID-19 or having symptoms COVID-19 like illness.

A student or staff who has symptoms consistent with a COVID-19-Like Illness or has a positive COVID-19 test must stay home at least 10 days after the symptoms first appeared AND until they have no fever for at least 24 hours without medication AND there is improvement of other symptoms.

All staff and students who have been in close contact with the confirmed case must stay home for 14 days from the date of last exposure even if they have no symptoms or they have a negative COVID-19 test done during quarantine. The parent/guardian of the COVID-19 positive student will immediately inform their student’s school of any positive test or symptoms, and staff will notify their supervisor. Principals and supervisors will immediately communicate with FCPS Health Services Specialist (Jen Waters) who will collaborate with the FCHD to respond and coordinate appropriate public notifications. The FCHD is responsible for contract tracing in Frederick County, but FCPS will provide additional notifications as appropriate.

**Sick Student Transportation.** Students who are exhibiting symptoms of illness will remain in the health suite isolation rooms until they are ready for transportation from school. Isolation rooms are outfitted with a standalone air purification unit to support enhanced ventilation needed for students and staff exhibiting symptoms. If school health staff deems the illness an urgent medical emergency, 911 will be called to transport the student to the hospital. If the illness does not require emergency medical services, school health staff will contact the parent/guardian of the student and request the student be picked up immediately. In the event a parent/guardian is inaccessible, the emergency contact(s) will be notified of the need to pick up the student immediately. If the parent/guardian or emergency contact cannot come to the building immediately, a mutually agreed upon alternative transportation option will be determined (i.e. taxi service, other trusted and approved adult, etc.).

**Food Services**

Both the cafeteria and classrooms will be utilized for students to consume meals under the current restrictions. As restrictions evolve, the cafeteria, and perhaps other areas currently unoccupied (such as elementary art classrooms), can be used to facilitate lunch activity closer to the norm. Tables will be marked by custodial staff to support social distancing in cafeterias, if they are utilized. The Maryland Recovery Plan for Education recommends that children bring their own meals as feasible, or that FCPS serve individually plated meals in classrooms instead of in a communal dining hall or cafeteria. Locations for meal service will be coordinated directly between Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) and school staff.
This ensures appropriate meal service and cleaning protocol can be accommodated based on specific school staffing.

**Meal Modifications.** FNS may streamline menu options/choices to facilitate delivery and serving of meals during stage two and three of the reopening plan. FNS will fully accommodate numerous food service requirements, including food allergies, and the privacy associated with students who receive free or reduced meals. “Share tables”, a location where students may place unopened food and drink that they choose not to consume, are not permitted until completion of stage three of the *Maryland Recovery Plan for Education*.

**Additional Considerations**

**Before and After School Care.** Custodial Services will provide cleaning and disinfectant products and cleaning cloths to each before and aftercare provider in an FCPS facility. Daycare providers will use FCPS chemicals and microfiber cleaning cloths after each session with students. Chemicals must be provided in containers properly marked (per OSHA) and the daycare will be responsible for storing the chemicals securely away from children.

**Next Steps – Logistics**

**Classroom Supervision for Lunch.** Part-time lunch monitors will be employed to the largest extent possible. It is likely that instructional staff may need to provide some of the necessary monitoring of decentralized lunch groups. Finalizing the staffing plans will facilitate the next steps to ensure adequate lunch coverage. FCPS may need to negotiate a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with FCTA in order to adequately provide supervision in this new environment.

**Community User Groups.** Updates about the current status of FCPS use of facilities by community user groups will be provided on the FCPS website at: [https://www.fcps.org/uof](https://www.fcps.org/uof). For any portion of the building that is approved to be open, community user groups are required to pay for custodial services until the State announces completion of Stage 3. With the additional workload created by the increased cleaning requirements, custodians cannot provide the same level of cleaning and disinfecting when there are extra occupants in the building. Additional custodial staffing will be required if community user groups are allowed to use the buildings in the fall.

**Visitors.** FCPS will need to limit school visitation to the extent legally-permissible (to be defined). Legal Services will need to define the legality/policy-changes necessary to bar “unnecessary” parent entry into the school building. This will minimize the logistical and procedural measures necessary to safely accommodate asymptomatic visitors who may still pose a health risk. Schools will provide a table in the vestibule/hallway for transferring material between parent/school/student. Parent meetings, including IEPs, should utilize technology to the greatest extent possible. Visitors are required to follow all FCPS protocols for face coverings, social distancing, and screenings applicable at the time of their visit to a school or building.
Employee Relations and Communications Work Group

This work group is divided into five subcommittees with the identified charge and scope of duties as noted below:

**Policies/Regulations/Negotiated Agreements**

This subcommittee is tasked with identifying adaptations to Board policies, FCPS regulations and negotiated agreements necessary to successfully implement a non-traditional operational process. This includes reviewing guidance and/or orders from CDC, OSHA, Maryland State Governor, MSDE, and Frederick County Government. The subcommittee makes needed changes to the Returning to Work: Workplace Guidebook for Employees aligning with government and health authorities. The subcommittee is reviewing Board policies, FCPS regulations and negotiated agreements to make recommendations to the Policy Committee if policies are impacted, to the Superintendent’s Advisory Council if regulations are impacted, or partnering with union representatives regarding MOUs to address topics outside of the current negotiated agreements.

**Screening**

This subcommittee is tasked with identifying screening techniques to support safety of the work environment and is working on screening recommendations for employees, including SafeSchools modules to review CDC guidelines; verification process for employees to confirm they are COVID-19 symptom free upon entering the work location and following CDC recommendations; and providing supervisors protocols when an employee becomes ill during the workday.

**Human Resource Management**

This subcommittee is tasked with reviewing options to maximize the use of FCPS support staff who need to recover days or require modified schedules. This subcommittee is working with FASSE union leadership and jointly identifying work tasks, professional development and required meetings to attend.

**Employee Support and Resources**

This subgroup is tasked with providing appropriate support and resources to employees regarding accommodations, leave, child care and mental health supports.

An employee guidebook has been developed to provide employees with details about reopening; work responsibilities; essential contact information regarding leave, benefits, and requests for accommodations; and supports for employees during the transition. This guidebook is fluid and updated as additional information and guidance becomes available. (Appendix R).

**Employee Communication Management**

This subcommittee is tasked with developing effective communication strategies to keep staff informed as each stage of recovery is implemented. Updates about reopening specific to FCPS employees can be accessed using the Employee Portal via InsideFCPS.
The subcommittee recommends creating age-appropriate signage in English and Spanish for posting in all schools and offices about COVID-19 requirements, and creating videos to address changes to school buildings and new social norms in education prior to students returning to school. A survey tool for collecting employee feedback regarding returning to work was sent to FCPS employees. This data will be used to identify key areas where employees may need support to return to work.

**Community Communication Management**

The Public Affairs Department is responsible for community communication and engagement. This department has created a communications plan to keep community members informed as each stage of recovery is implemented. Several survey tools have been developed to garner parent and community feedback regarding the FCPS reopening plan.

- Updates about reopening for the general public can be accessed on the FCPS website: https://www.fcps.org/update Other communication tools to share key information will be utilized such as FindOutFirst, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, press releases, Channel 18, and the Superintendent’s blog.

**Reopening Plan- Communication Summary**

In February, FCPS received its first message from the State regarding the COVID-19 pandemic’s potentially devastating impact on public education. By March 12, the inevitable happened as State Superintendent Dr. Karen Salmon directed the closure of all Maryland schools. Distance Learning, Continuity of Learning and Social Distancing became common terms. It was not until May 6 that FCPS students and staff learned that schools would not reopen for the remainder of the 2019/2020 school year.

FCPS began planning for the unknown, working on possibilities for how public education would occur on its originally scheduled first day of the school year for students, August 31. Would the COVID-19 pandemic require that FCPS continue virtual learning, develop some new hybrid model that combines partial virtual learning with a partially face-to-face option, or return to the traditional learning model?

FCPS established four work groups to develop a Reopening Plan for the 2020/2021 school year. Each work group focused on strategic components of the reopening plan, which includes Employee Relations and Communications, Instructional, Logistics, and Special Services and Student Supports. In addition, FCPS formed a Parent Advisory Group to collect ongoing feedback regarding the plan from a diverse group of parents.

The Reopening Plan is of extreme importance, and would be incomplete without the proper input from the various stakeholders.

The attached Communication Plan provides a chronological listing of communications that occurred from the start of the COVID pandemic’s impact on FCPS operations to the planned Superintendent’s Reopening Kick-Off.

The plan was logically structured to include communication to staff and community on separate platforms, with community messaging occurring via the internet (FindOutFirst(FOF)/News Releases/Social Media) and staff communication via the intranet (Employee News/insidefcps). The plan encompasses various forms of communication including videos of the Superintendent and the county’s Health Officer Dr. Barbara Brookmyer and special announcements from the Superintendent.
The plan includes announcements from the State Superintendent, messages regarding the emergency meals program, notification for use of facilities, introduction of Continuity of Learning, status of athletics, and technology distributions.

In Phase 7, the Communication Plan highlights the work of the various work groups and Parent Advisory Group, presentations to the Board, staff and community surveys, community virtual meetings and specially produced videos to inform the community of new norms and facility changes. The plan will culminate with an FCPS Reopening Kick-Off.

The following Communication Plan demonstrates the FCPS mission to engage stakeholders throughout the COVID pandemic and the school system’s commitment to continuing to strive to keep the FCPS community informed as students and staff prepare to return to safe and academically efficient facilities and dynamic instruction.

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<th>Communication</th>
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<th>Stakeholder Group</th>
<th>Responsible Staff</th>
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<td>Daryl Boffman Public Affairs</td>
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<td>3/6/20</td>
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<td>COVID-19 Update - State of Emergency by Governor</td>
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<td>FCPS creates COVID-19 Update Resource page with FAQ, Communications, Videos</td>
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<td>State Superintendent’s directive to close schools from March 16-27, 2020</td>
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<td>Notification from Use of Facilities (UOF) Coordinator to all community user</td>
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<td>Deb Huffman, UOF Coordinator</td>
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<td>groups (CUG) of cancellation of all events through March 27.</td>
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<td>Community</td>
<td>Kevin Cuppett, Curriculum, Instruction &amp;</td>
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<td>Innovation</td>
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<td>Academic content and resources for families made available</td>
<td>FOF ALL</td>
<td>Community</td>
<td>Kevin Cuppett, Curriculum, Instruction &amp;</td>
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<td>VIDEO: Dr. Alban – COVID-19 Update to Community</td>
<td>Video via FOF ALL/FCPS TV/Website/</td>
<td>Community</td>
<td>Daryl Boffman, Public Affairs</td>
<td>3/24/20</td>
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<td>Social Media</td>
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<td>Superintendent’s Off the Cuff Blog - Dealing with a Pandemic: We are in this</td>
<td>FOF/Website/Social Media</td>
<td>Community &amp; Staff</td>
<td>Dr. Alban, FCPS Superintendent</td>
<td>3/24/20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maryland Superintendent announces all Maryland schools closed through Friday, April 24</td>
<td>Televised Briefing/News Release/FOF ALL</td>
<td>Community &amp; Staff</td>
<td>Dr. Salmon Maryland State Superintendent</td>
<td>3/25/20</td>
<td>4/24/20</td>
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<tr>
<td>FCPS is approved for COL effective March 30, 2020</td>
<td>Televised Briefing/News Release/FOF ALL</td>
<td>Community &amp; Staff</td>
<td>Dr. Salmon Maryland State Superintendent</td>
<td>3/25/20</td>
<td>3/25/20</td>
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<tr>
<td>UOF Coordinator to all CUG that events are cancelled through April 24</td>
<td>FOF/Inside FCPS</td>
<td>Community &amp; Staff</td>
<td>Deb Huffman UOF Coordinator</td>
<td>3/25/20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chromebooks and Wi-fi hotspots available to families who have no access to online learning</td>
<td>FOF/Inside FCPS/News Release</td>
<td>Community</td>
<td>Ted Gardner Technology Infrastructure</td>
<td>3/26/20</td>
<td>4/2/20</td>
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<td>Schoology Outage</td>
<td>FOF ALL</td>
<td>Community</td>
<td>Kevin Cuppett Curriculum, Instruction &amp; Innovation</td>
<td>3/30/20</td>
<td>4/2/20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Superintendent’s message Re Continuity of learning</td>
<td>FOF ALL</td>
<td>Community</td>
<td>Dr. Alban FCPS Superintendent</td>
<td>3/30/20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Superintendent’s Off the Cuff Blog – Talking to Children and Adolescents About COVID-19</td>
<td>FOF/Website/Social Media</td>
<td>Community &amp; Staff</td>
<td>Dr. Alban FCPS Superintendent</td>
<td>3/31/20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Superintendent’s Off the Cuff Blog - Dealing with a Pandemic: Staying Connected</td>
<td>FOF/Website/Social Media</td>
<td>Community &amp; Staff</td>
<td>Dr. Alban FCPS Superintendent</td>
<td>4/7/20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Superintendent’s Off the Cuff Blog – Dealing with a Pandemic: So Close and yet So Far</td>
<td>FOF/Website/Social Media</td>
<td>Community &amp; Staff</td>
<td>Dr. Alban FCPS Superintendent</td>
<td>4/14/20</td>
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<tr>
<td>State Superintendent extends all Maryland schools closed through May 15, 2020</td>
<td>Televised Briefing/News Release/FOF ALL</td>
<td>Community &amp; Staff</td>
<td>Dr. Salmon Maryland State Superintendent</td>
<td>4/17/20</td>
<td>5/15/20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Email from UOF Coordinator to all CUG that all events are cancelled due to closure through May 15</td>
<td>Press Release/FOF ALL/Website</td>
<td>Community</td>
<td>Deb Huffman UOF Coordinator</td>
<td>4/20/20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Superintendent's Off the Cuff Blog - Dealing with a Pandemic: Adjusting to Distance Learning</td>
<td>FOF/Website/Social Media</td>
<td>Community &amp; Staff</td>
<td>Dr. Alban FCPS Superintendent</td>
<td>4/21/20</td>
<td>4/21/20</td>
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<tr>
<td>FCPS releases COL Report 1.0 to Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE)</td>
<td>FOF ALL/Website</td>
<td>Community &amp; Staff</td>
<td>Dr. Alban FCPS Superintendent</td>
<td>4/24/20</td>
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<tr>
<td>FCPS COL Survey completed by Parents/Guardians/Teachers</td>
<td>FOF/Survey</td>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>Jamie Aliveto System Accountability &amp; School Administration</td>
<td>4/24/20</td>
<td>5/8/20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Superintendent's Off the Cuff Blog - Dealing with a Pandemic: Everyday Heroes in the Business Services Team</td>
<td>FOF/Website/Social Media</td>
<td>Community &amp; Staff</td>
<td>Dr. Alban FCPS Superintendent</td>
<td>4/28/20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maryland Public Secondary Schools Athletic Association (MPSSAA) cancels spring sports events</td>
<td>Press Release/FOF ALL/Website</td>
<td>Community</td>
<td>Kevin Kendro Athletics</td>
<td>4/28/20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Superintendent's Off the Cuff Blog - Dealing with a Pandemic: Everyday Heroes in the Instructional Team</td>
<td>FOF/Website/Social Media</td>
<td>Community &amp; Staff</td>
<td>Dr. Alban FCPS Superintendent</td>
<td>5/5/20</td>
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<td>Outdoor Wi-Fi and Meals Update</td>
<td>Press Release/FOF Website/Social Media</td>
<td>Community &amp; Staff</td>
<td>Ted Gardner Technology Infrastructure</td>
<td>5/5/20</td>
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<td>Communication</td>
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<tr>
<td>State Superintendent announces closure of all Maryland schools through rest of school year</td>
<td>Televiased Briefing/News Release/FOF ALL</td>
<td>Community &amp; Staff</td>
<td>Dr. Salmon Maryland State Superintendent</td>
<td>5/6/20</td>
<td>6/17/20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Synchronous Support Survey completed by Staff in the Tuscarora Feeder pattern only</td>
<td>Employee News/Survey</td>
<td>Tuscarora Feeder Staff</td>
<td>Jamie Aliveto System Accountability &amp; School Administration</td>
<td>5/6/20</td>
<td>5/6/20</td>
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<tr>
<td>All CUG events (indoor and outdoor) are suspended for FY20. Update due in mid-July.</td>
<td>Press Release/FOF ALL/Website</td>
<td>Community</td>
<td>Paul Lebo Operations</td>
<td>5/11/20</td>
<td>7/15/20</td>
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<tr>
<td>FCPS Announces Virtual Graduation Ceremonies June 8 - 12</td>
<td>Press Release/FOF ALL/Website/Social Media</td>
<td>Community &amp; Staff</td>
<td>Dr. Alban FCPS Superintendent</td>
<td>5/14/20</td>
<td>5/14/20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maryland Governor announces entry to Recovery Phase - Stage 1</td>
<td>Televiased Briefing/News Release/FOF ALL</td>
<td>Community &amp; Staff</td>
<td>Larry Hogan Maryland Governor</td>
<td>5/15/20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Multi-Grade Survey for Teachers who participated in multi-grade only</td>
<td>Inside FCPS/Survey</td>
<td>Staff</td>
<td>Jamie Aliveto System Accountability &amp; School Administration</td>
<td>5/18/20</td>
<td>5/22/20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Superintendent's Off the Cuff Blog - Dealing with a Pandemic: Find the Silver Lining</td>
<td>FOF/Website/Social Media</td>
<td>Community &amp; Staff</td>
<td>Dr. Alban FCPS Superintendent</td>
<td>5/19/20</td>
<td>5/19/20</td>
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<tr>
<td>UOF Update: All events (indoors and outdoors) are suspended thru July 31.</td>
<td>Press Release/FOF ALL/Website</td>
<td>Community</td>
<td>Deb Huffman UOF Coordinator</td>
<td>5/26/20</td>
<td>7/31/20</td>
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<tr>
<td>A Message from the Superintendent: Overview of the Month of June</td>
<td>FOF ALL/Website</td>
<td>Community and Staff</td>
<td>Dr. Alban FCPS Superintendent</td>
<td>6/1/20</td>
<td>6/1/20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Communication Tools</td>
<td>Stakeholder Group</td>
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<td>Instructional Work Group</td>
<td>Google Meet</td>
<td>Staff</td>
<td>Dan Lippy Accountability &amp; School Administration</td>
<td>6/1/20</td>
<td>7/3/20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Special Services and Student</td>
<td>Google Meet</td>
<td>Staff</td>
<td>Linda Chambers &amp; Dana Falls Special Education Compliance &amp; Student Support/Student Services</td>
<td>6/1/20</td>
<td>7/3/20</td>
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<td>Supports Work Group</td>
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<td>Employee Relations and</td>
<td>Google Meet</td>
<td>Staff</td>
<td>Tiana Haile &amp; Donna Clabaugh Public Affairs &amp; Human Resources</td>
<td>6/1/20</td>
<td>7/3/20</td>
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<td>Communications Work Group</td>
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<td>COVID-19 Leave Grant for 12-month</td>
<td>Employee News</td>
<td>Staff</td>
<td>Tim Thornburg Human Resources</td>
<td>6/2/20</td>
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<td>employees (5 days which must be used</td>
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<td>Maryland Governor announces entry</td>
<td>Televised Briefing</td>
<td>Community &amp; Staff</td>
<td>Larry Hogan Maryland Governor</td>
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<td>Superintendent’s Off the Cuff Blog</td>
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<td>Dr. Alban FCPS Superintendent</td>
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<td>- Dealing with a Pandemic: A Roller</td>
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<td>Coaster Ride</td>
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<td>Parent Advisory Group</td>
<td>Google Meet</td>
<td>Community &amp; Staff</td>
<td>Daryl Boffman/Michael Franklin &amp; Donna Quatman-Wilder Public Affairs</td>
<td>6/10/20</td>
<td>7/31/20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Planning Underway to Reopen Schools</td>
<td>Google Meet</td>
<td>Community &amp; Staff</td>
<td>Dr. Alban, Cabinet, Workgroups</td>
<td>6/10/20</td>
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<td>Communication</td>
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<td>FCPS System-Wide Student Reflection Day</td>
<td>FOF ALL/Survey Monkey</td>
<td>Students</td>
<td>Jamie Aliveto System Accountability &amp; School Administration</td>
<td>6/10/20</td>
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<tr>
<td>COL Reflection Survey for Staff</td>
<td>Employee News</td>
<td>Staff</td>
<td>Jamie Aliveto System Accountability &amp; School Administration</td>
<td>6/11/20</td>
<td>6/16/20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Distance Learning Self-Assessment completed by Teachers</td>
<td>Employee News</td>
<td>Staff</td>
<td>Jamie Aliveto System Accountability &amp; School Administration</td>
<td>6/11/20</td>
<td>6/16/20</td>
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<td>Link to Reflections Activity for Spanish-Speaking Students</td>
<td>FOF ALL/Survey Monkey</td>
<td>Spanish Speaking Students</td>
<td>Jamie Aliveto System Accountability &amp; School Administration</td>
<td>6/12/20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Next School Year Parent Inventory</td>
<td>FOF ALL/Survey Monkey</td>
<td>Parents &amp; Guardians</td>
<td>Jamie Aliveto System Accountability &amp; School Administration</td>
<td>6/14/20</td>
<td>6/22/20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Superintendent's Off the Cuff Blog - Dealing with a Pandemic: Uncertainty</td>
<td>FOF/Website/Social Media</td>
<td>Community &amp; Staff</td>
<td>Dr. Alban FCPS Superintendent</td>
<td>6/16/20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Present Draft Reopening Plan to the BOE</td>
<td>Televised Google Meet Board meeting/FOF ALL/Website/Social Media/FCPS TV</td>
<td>Community &amp; Staff</td>
<td>Dr. Alban FCPS Superintendent</td>
<td>7/8/20</td>
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<td>Communication</td>
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<td>Virtual Town Hall Meeting - Introduce Draft Reopening Plan</td>
<td>Televised Google Meet Virtual Town Hall Meeting/FOF ALL/Social Media/Website/FCPS TV</td>
<td>Community &amp; Staff</td>
<td>Dr. Alban and Committee Chairs</td>
<td>7/8/20</td>
<td>7/15/20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parent Feedback on Reopening and Advancing Forward</td>
<td>FOF ALL/Survey</td>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>Jamie Aliveto System Accountability &amp; School Administration</td>
<td>7/15/20</td>
<td>7/23/20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Staff Feedback on Reopening and Advancing Forward</td>
<td>Employee News/Survey Monkey</td>
<td>Staff</td>
<td>Jamie Aliveto System Accountability &amp; School Administration</td>
<td>7/15/20</td>
<td>7/23/20</td>
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<tr>
<td>FCPS Posts Virtual Town Hall Video and Translated Draft Reopening Plan</td>
<td>FOF ALL/Website/Social media</td>
<td>Community and Staff</td>
<td>Daryl Boffman Public Affairs</td>
<td>7/16/20</td>
<td>7/16/20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Publish Virtual Town Hall meeting with Closed-Captioning in Spanish</td>
<td>FOF ALL/Website/Social media</td>
<td>Community</td>
<td>Daryl Boffman Public Affairs</td>
<td>7/16/20</td>
<td>7/22/20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Publish Virtual Town Hall meeting’s FAQs in English and Spanish</td>
<td>FOF ALL/Website/Social media</td>
<td>Community</td>
<td>Daryl Boffman Public Affairs</td>
<td>7/16/20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Publish School Building Layout Video</td>
<td>FOF ALL/Website/Social media/FCPS TV</td>
<td>Community &amp; Staff</td>
<td>Daryl Boffman Public Affairs</td>
<td>7/20/20</td>
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<td>Publish New School Norms Video</td>
<td>FOF ALL/Website/Social media/FCPS TV</td>
<td>Community &amp; Staff</td>
<td>Daryl Boffman Public Affairs</td>
<td>7/20/20</td>
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<td>Present Revised Reopening Plan to the BOE</td>
<td>Televised Google Meet Board meeting/FOF ALL/Website/Social Media/FCPS TV</td>
<td>Community &amp; Staff</td>
<td>Dr. Alban FCPS Superintendent</td>
<td>7/29/20</td>
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<td>FCPS Student Registration Intention Form</td>
<td>FOF ALL/Website/Social media</td>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>Jamie Aliveto System Accountability &amp; School Administration</td>
<td>7/30/20</td>
<td>8/6/20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Present Board Approved Revised Reopening Plan to the community</td>
<td>FOF ALL/Website/Social media/FCPS TV</td>
<td>Community &amp; Staff</td>
<td>Dr. Alban FCPS Superintendent</td>
<td>8/3/20</td>
<td>8/10/20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Superintendent’s Message Video - Reopening Kick-off</td>
<td>Video via FOF ALL/FCPS TV/ Website/Social Media</td>
<td>Community &amp; Staff</td>
<td>Dr. Alban FCPS Superintendent</td>
<td>8/10/20</td>
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<td>FCPS Reopens</td>
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Parent Advisory Group (PAG)

**Purpose:** To support the work of FCPS in developing its reopening plan for 2020/2021 school year.

**Co-Chairs:** Donna Quatman-Wilder and Michael (Mike) Franklin

**Cabinet Liaison:** Daryl Boffman, Executive Director for Public Affairs

**Meeting Summary 6/10/20**

**Agenda:** The Group was informed about:

- the purpose and membership of the Parent Advisory Group. Daryl Boffman was introduced as the Cabinet Liaison and Michael Franklin and Donna Quatman-Wilder were introduced as the Chairpersons.
- the FCPS Reopening Plan’s 4-committee structure and charges in developing the Plan.
- FCPS’s priorities in developing the plans which include first and foremost, the safety and health of students, employees, and families.
- the Reopening Plan Work Groups’ requirement to reference the CDC and MD Public Schools Plan as guiding tools for development of the Reopening Plan.

At this point there were no documents or plans to review; therefore, this meeting served as a membership introduction, orientation and plan overview meeting.

**Meeting Summary 6/17/20**

**Agenda:**

- As there were additional members in attendance, the purpose, membership and committee structure and other information shared in the first meeting were restated.
- Each member was invited to introduce themselves and their connection to FCPS. Each member explained how they were selected to participate in the group.
- The Group was presented with the following questions posed from the committees for PAG’s feedback.

1. If we were instructed by the State Superintendent to return to school as normal in August. What conditions would need to be met for you to feel comfortable returning your child to the school building?

2. Upon returning to school, we may need to restrict visitor access to the building beyond the front office. What preferences and/or concerns do you have regarding Visitor Access Obstacles?

3. We may not be able to serve meals in the cafeteria. Are there any concerns with having students served meals in the classroom?

4. If we have to conduct classes by bringing in a portion of the classroom, while continuing distant learning with the remaining portion. Do you have any preferences or concerns with a 50 / 50 vs. 25 / 75 split?
Meeting Summary 6/24/20

**Agenda:**

- The Group received an update regarding the cabinet’s discussion of the previous week’s questions and comments received from the group.

- Updates were received regarding: visitor considerations, school meal arrangements, plans for videotaping sample school layout and new school norms as a result of COVID-19.

The Group discussed the definition of Attendance as it relates to the students during the Distance Learning and Hybrid model. New concerns and ideas discussed include High School virtual participation only, enforcing the wearing of face coverings, ubiquitous access to hand sanitizer, COVID-19 empathy and safety during recess.

Meeting Summary 07/01/20

**Agenda:**

- Group members were asked if they would be interested in volunteering for another week or 2. All in attendance agreed to continue to serve.

- The Group was updated regarding the revised Hybrid model’s student grouping (A/A B/B)

Concerns from Agenda Items discussed include 100% requirement for face coverings, limited access to bathrooms with monitoring, teacher shortages due to fear and discomfort, Virtual Town Hall communication diversity and student’s ability to Opt-Out.

Meeting Summary 07/08/20

**Agenda:**

The July 8, meeting was dedicated to the review of the Draft Reopening Plan that was reviewed by the Board. Questions and Concerns Expressed by the Parent Advisory Group regarding the Draft Reopening Plan include:

A concern was raised regarding listing ethnicity with names of the Hispanic Community. Request to change the labeling from “Lower Level English Proficiency Students.” Suggestion to consider procedures for students who arrive on their unassigned days at school.

Additional discussions include: Teachers’ work load for both in-class and virtual learning students, distribution of paper packets, assessments and grading, elementary special education, requiring 4 – 5 days of instruction for students that are unable to participate in distance learning, transportation concerns, options for students with IEPS and a modified hybrid approach.

NO Meeting Scheduled for 07/15/20 Due to Virtual Town Hall
Parent Advisory Group Feedback

- Endorse the Hybrid model because it minimizes student exposure.
- Coordinate scheduling of students based on school-aged siblings.
- Ensure consistent meal delivery is satisfied regardless of established schedule.
- Believe the Hybrid schedule presents a significant challenge for extended daycare requirements.
- Be cognizant of FCPS employees with children in FCPS who may have daycare conflicts during their off days.
- Explore how families who are using daycare are supposed to complete the online learning requirements.
- Account for families’ job responsibilities and the need to support three hours of virtual learning instruction each day.
- Account for school holidays impacting the equal access for students between the A/B day schedule.
- Recommend language learners receive comparable services to students with disabilities by affording extra face-to-face instructional time.
- Be cognizant of the challenges related to weight of a bookbag particularly for younger children.
- Define attendance differently because the current definition does not work. Consider defining attendance by students’ completion of assignments and demonstration mastery for each assignment. Many valid reasons were expressed regarding the barriers of “true attendance” such as employment, language barriers, income, fears, etc.
- Consider requiring high school students to participate in online learning and elementary school students attending in-school classes each day.
- Anticipate issues related to enforcing requirements associated to mask coverings particularly with younger children. Additionally, the group expressed concerns about activities like lunch and physical education which could exasperate student exposure.
- Institute mandatory hand sanitizer stations and require each student to sanitize their hands prior to entering a building much like a cruise ship (possibly mandatory hand sanitizer before entry to each classroom).
- Offer lessons that specifically address COVID-19 and stress the importance of empathy for those who have contracted the virus.
- Limit the number of students permitted in a bathroom at one time. Consider staff monitors.
- Provide clear direction on activities such as recess.
Conclusion

A few short months ago, the thought of crafting a plan for providing educational opportunities for students during a global pandemic would have been the plotline for a fast-moving novel. The challenges of COVID-19 forced organizations, large and small, to pivot quickly and apply flexible thinking to every ingrained process. FCPS entered the closure period with many of the same challenges as other large school districts. Students, staff, and families were confronted with new demands and obstacles. Stakeholders provided valuable feedback and insights to aid in crafting improved procedures, strategies, and tools. Grounded in principles driven by the FCPS strategic goals and priorities and drawing on the spirit of innovation and collaboration that has always been a hallmark of our school system, the FCPS community worked together to craft plans for a safe and successful 2020/21 school year for each and every student. FCPS is committed to the continuous improvement process. As with any plan, progress monitoring and evaluation are critical components. To review the FCPS evaluation plan for virtual learning, please reference Appendix S.
Appendices

Appendix A: Parent Guardian Learning Coach HS
Appendix B: Social-Emotional Correspondence (Elementary School)
Appendix C: Social-Emotional Correspondence (Middle School)
Appendix D: Social-Emotional Correspondence (High School)
Appendix E: Trauma Informed Discipline
Appendix F: COVID-19 and Social Discord
Appendix G: 504 Accommodation During Distance Learning
Appendix H: USDE Fact Sheet- Providing Services to English Learners
Appendix I: Compliance Considerations for English Learners
Appendix J: CAL Digest- Integrated Content and Language Instruction
Appendix K: Effective and Appropriate Feedback for English Learners
Appendix L: Questions and Answers on Providing Services to Children with Disabilities
Appendix M: MSDE Technical Assistance Bulletin- May 2020
Appendix N: Alternatives for Virtual Assessments
Appendix O: MSDE Technical Assistance Bulletin- June 9, 2020
Appendix P: Guidance for Preparing Online Teachers to Work with Special Education Students
Appendix Q: MSDE- Transportation for Students with Disabilities
Appendix R: FCPS Employee Guidebook
Appendix S: Evaluation of FCPS Virtual Learning Model
Appendix T: Revisions to Reopening Plan

➢ **Logistics**- Face Coverings in the School Building- August 12, 2020
➢ **Logistics**- Response to a Laboratory Confirmed Case of COVID-19 and Persons with COVID-19-Like Illness in Schools- August 12, 2020
➢ **Logistics**- Community User Groups- August 12, 2020
➢ **Employee Relations and Communications**- Policies/Regulations/Negotiated Agreements- August 12, 2020
➢ **Employee Relations and Communications**- Employee Communication Management- August 12, 2020
➢ **Instructional**- Final Assessment Plan- August 12, 2020
Advice for Serving as a Parent/Guardian Learning Coach

Students participating in courses in a virtual environment should expect a rigorous academic experience which differs in demands from the Continuity of Learning that students experienced in the spring of 2020. For students participating in the Full Virtual Learning Model, the requirements and workload will be equitable to the course content and workload experienced in a face-to-face environment. For students participating in the In-School Hybrid model, virtual experiences will be a continuation of and be directly related to the face-to-face instructional time. FCPS believes that parents and guardians can provide critical support to help their children be successful in a virtual learning environment.

Prior to the start of class and during engagement until course completion:

- Reinforce that virtual courses and coursework are as important as face-to-face courses.
- Help your students establish and maintain a regular schedule for working on virtual courses daily. Build in breaks and encourage movement.
- Help students establish a study space, including the technology needed for working online with reduced distractions.
- Participate in required orientation for the Full Virtual Learning model.
- Review the course syllabus with your student and define expectations.
  - Look fors:
    - Teacher contact information
    - How to submit assignments
    - Google Meet sessions
    - Office hours
    - Grading expectations
    - Assessment requirements
- Set up Schoology notifications and add the Daily Digest to your parent account to help with time management and due dates.
- Monitor your student’s progress weekly. For Frederick County Virtual School courses, biweekly progress reports will be sent from each teacher to email accounts for students, parents, and counselors.
- Help your student maintain pace and not fall behind in an effort to avoid increased anxiety and becoming overwhelmed. A student should be prepared to designate 80-90 minutes per course per day to maintain satisfactory pace. A minimum of 5 hours per day. Additional work may be required for upper level course work.
- Sometimes learning can be a struggle. Encourage your student to contact teachers when they don’t understand or have questions about an assignment. Try not to jump in too fast to “save the day.”
- Consider incentives to help motivate students.
- Reach out to your child’s teacher, mentor, or counselor, for additional support if needed.
Dear Parents and Guardians:

Frederick County Public Schools is pleased to share that we are implementing a curriculum to support social emotional learning in all elementary classes, grades 3-5, in the 2020-2021 school year. *Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies* (PATHS) is the curriculum chosen for use in our schools.

Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS) is the curriculum chosen for use in our schools. Social emotional learning (SEL) is an important part of each student’s healthy development. PATHS will teach SEL skills to help students succeed in school and life. SEL skills include handling emotions constructively, behaving responsibly, making good decisions, and developing caring, positive relationships. SEL contributes to a positive school climate, improvements in academic achievement, and reductions in bullying behavior.

The PATHS program teaches and reinforces many key aspects of SEL, shown through research to improve behavior, reduce conflict and improve academics. One FCPS elementary school used the program last year to support an overall focus on developing the whole child. It resulted in students’ increased attention in the classroom, increased ability to organize thoughts, improved behavior, and better use of conflict-resolution strategies.

If you have any questions about social emotional learning or PATHS, please contact me, a school counselor, or FCPS Mental Health and Psychological Services Supervisor Ann McGreevy at 301-696-6880.

Sincerely,

[Insert name]
Principal
Dear Parents and Guardians:

Frederick County Public Schools is pleased to share that we are implementing a curriculum to support social emotional learning in all Middle Schools in the 2020-2021 school year.

Social emotional learning (SEL) is an important part of each student’s healthy development and teaches skills to help students succeed in school and life. SEL skills include handling emotions constructively, behaving responsibly, making good decisions, and developing caring, positive relationships. SEL contributes to a positive school climate, improvements in academic achievement, and reductions in bullying behavior.

If you have any questions about social emotional learning, please contact me, a school counselor, or FCPS Mental Health and Psychological Services Supervisor Ann McGreevy at 301-696-6880.

Sincerely,

[Insert name]
Principal
Dear Parents and Guardians:

Frederick County Public Schools is pleased to share that high school teachers have access to a Social Emotional Learning (SEL) Curriculum that they can implement during the 2020-2021 school year.

Social emotional learning (SEL) is an important part of each student’s healthy development and teaches skills to help students succeed in school and life. SEL skills include handling emotions constructively, behaving responsibly, making good decisions, and developing caring, positive relationships. SEL contributes to a positive school climate, improvements in academic achievement, and reductions in bullying behavior.

If you have any questions about social emotional learning, please contact me, a school counselor, or FCPS Mental Health and Psychological Services Supervisor Ann McGreevy at 301-696-6880.

Sincerely,

[Insert name]
Principal
Trauma Informed Discipline

**Current Approach**

The current discipline regulation for FCPS is policy 400-08. It was amended in March of 2018 and is based on the philosophy that discipline is modeled, taught, and approached with positive intent. “Training is important in the development of good citizens; the school system adopts the principles of cultural competency, fairness, equity, continuous improvement and conflict resolution. In order to maintain a positive, safe, and inviting school climate where learning and citizenship will occur, all individuals will be expected to exemplify this philosophy.” It is current practice that student discipline should be handled from a tiered approach and that much deliberation should be done before any long term suspensions or requests for extended suspension/expulsion be considered.

**Anticipation of Increase in Maladaptive Behaviors**

As we return to school, we should anticipate that there will be an increase in student behavioral concerns; some of them rooted in stress responses to experiences during school closure and some in stress responses due to returning. A brain based approach to creating readiness to learn is essential, relying on the maxim, “we must regulate in order to relate and only then can we reason.” (B. Perry, 2020). Therefore, it will be paramount that students feel safe; emotionally safe, physically safe, and academically safe. Staff must always keep in mind that behavior is communication and train themselves to ask, “what is the student trying to tell me by behaving in this way and how can I increase their perception of safety?” It will be more important than ever that teachers and administrators are proactive in setting up systems that support the well-being of each and every student, be slow to react but quick to respond, and to move through standard disciplinary procedures only after time, conversation and reflection have taken place.

According to J. Stuart Ablon, Ph.D. in *Psychology Today*, “Systems of escalating consequences are sometimes called “progressive discipline.” But this is a misnomer: when it comes to curbing challenging behavior, those systems are anything but progressive. In fact, I like to refer to them as “progressive dysregulation,” since both students and educators become increasingly dysregulated, with dire consequences for everyone, including the teachers.” (January 2020). Everyone has been through something during the extended school closure and being sensitive to this will help create the supportive environment that is needed to help students feel comfortable returning to school. There was a time when trauma informed supports were thought to only be for a certain set of students. Now is the time to implement trauma informed discipline for all and ensure that our actions match the language written in our policy - “All of us have a responsibility to treat one another with courtesy and respect. If students become angry or upset, school personnel will educate...to reach a peaceful resolution to their problems.”
Considerations for Change Upon Return for Phases 2 and 3

- Ensure that all staff know of available resources that can help them to implement supportive discipline procedures.
- Expect a more thorough understanding of student history prior to enacting any discipline.
- Eliminate classroom management strategies that promote shaming. Ex. clip charts, placing student names on board and tally systems on boards that count negative behaviors.
- Place a temporary moratorium (at least the first quarter) on out-of-school suspensions except for extreme circumstances.
- Monitor numbers of disciplinary actions that are coming from each class. Higher numbers should generate a response from administration for additional teacher support.
- Expand tiers of intervention in policy 400-08 to include restorative practices, reteaching of social emotional lessons, a collaborative approach to solving student problems, trauma informed interventions, conscious discipline.

Questions to Answer

- Are the systems in place to identify students who may need extra support robust and well executed? What positive, productive conversations are happening in order to solve problems for those students? How are we monitoring if interventions are effective?
- Are teachers being given permission to build in connection, relationship and community building routines and activities into their schedule?
COVID-19 and Social Discord
Student Risk Factors that may be Displayed this Fall

- Grief and loss due to:
  - Illness, hospitalization and/or death of family members.
  - Not living with infected family members for extended periods.
  - Limited contact with loved ones.

- Depressive symptoms including pervasive sadness, frequent tearfulness, poor appetite, rapid onset of frustration, and lethargy due to:
  - Poor management of stress
  - Minimal resources
  - Limitations in ability to cope

- Withdrawn and isolative behaviors including:
  - Regression of socialization skills
  - Anxiety surrounding peer interaction
  - Fear that peers and staff may be COVID-19 carriers
  - Social awkwardness
  - Loneliness

- Separation anxiety:
  - Separation anxiety is anxiety resulting from leaving caregivers at home. This may be due to the student worrying about the safety of their caregivers and often results in clinginess to parents/preferred adults.

- Generalized anxiety/avoidance due to:
  - Fear of contracting COVID-19
  - Fear of dying
  - Concern regarding safety of school setting
  - Fear of family becoming sick or dying

- Academic frustration including:
  - Worrying or feeling overwhelmed due to new academic/social demands
  - Atypical schedule/routines/structure
  - Feeling behind in academic endeavors

- Fatigue due to:
  - Difficulty re-adjusting to the new school/sleep schedule
  - Insomnia Anxiety/racing thoughts at bedtime

- Attentional difficulties:
  - Many students are accustomed to the rapid feedback of video games and watching increased amounts of media entertainment while being home. This makes attention to classroom dialogue more difficult.
  - “On demand” focused attention was probably less consistent or required within the home.
  - Schedule and sleep cycle changes can promote rapid onset of attentional fatigue.

- Irritability and Agitation due to:
● Undefined/unprocessed feelings of anxiety
● Being required to adhere to routines and demands after extended amount of time with less formal demands
● Sleep disturbances
● Anxiety
● Depression

● Family stressors due to:
  ○ Large amount of time in house
  ○ Job loss
  ○ Crowded homes
  ○ Sick family members

● Suicidal ideation due to hopelessness, feeling overwhelmed, self-deprecating comments, low self-worth, etc...

Due to the social discord many of our students and staff have experienced a variety of emotions and behaviors. They include:

● Irritability (undefined angst)
● A desire for a forum to process views or express concerns
● Mistrust of faculty/authority figures
● Questions regarding Identity and empowerment
● Acting out messages within the home/media- intolerance, mistrust, guilt
● Diverse conceptualization/generalizations of culturally different peers/staff
● Fear toward authority figures

Ways teachers should respond to students related to the social discord include:

● Integrate personal experiences into discussions
● Front load relevant SEL program (PATHS, Emozi, School Connect, or Digital Solutions) modules that focus upon managing feelings of fear, anger, sadness, and worry
● Reassure students of their safety
● Forums for private as well as group discussion to help students learn to accept different ideas and to reassure safety
● Do not shy away from setting aside time for age appropriate discussions of racial/cultural differences and tolerance
● TeachingTolerance.org has many great resources for teachers to support holding these conversations

● This is a great resource full of helpful tips.
Some Examples of 504 Accommodations during Distance Learning

a. **Organizational aids** can be synonymous with graphic organizers, at times. Organizational aids can support students with organizing their math manipulatives if needed. They can support reading: organizing passages by color - main idea highlighted in one color, supporting details in another, conclusion in another. Or, organize a students' physical materials; bins for each subject's materials, an accordion folder to organize materials of each subject.

b. When **checking for understanding**, parents can ask the student if they understand the question/problem or what was read. If they do allow them to proceed, if they do not reread the problem/question and try to explain what is being asked.

c. **Chunking of assignments**: The student may require assignments to be broken down into passages or paragraphs of text at a time to demonstrate *comprehension* of the text. This could be any of the following; reading a paragraph at a time, 2-3 sentences at a time, 1 page at a time. Your child should not be expected to read entire paragraphs of texts at a time and be able to synthesize all information to demonstrate comprehension of all concepts covered in the text. *Or for Math*: Your student may need to complete one math problem at a time and review the math problem before required to move on to the next problem. The student should not be expected to complete problems incorrectly without receiving feedback and support on the assignment.

d. **Preferential seating**: Your child may not need this while at home. However, please consider seating location and your location, when providing your student with directions to tasks.

e. **Extended Time**: Your child may need access to extra time to complete a given task. This might not be needed while completing learning tasks at home, but in the case it is, please allow your student extra time to complete a task or revisit a task if needed. Extended Time is not likely to be needed to turn in assignments given that all assignments are shortened and reduced during Distance Learning.

f. **Calculation Device**: Your child may access a calculation device to support their understanding of math problems. Encourage your child to attempt the problem using strategies they have learned prior to using the device.

g. **Frequent Breaks**: While working on assignments your child may need to stop and take a break. Breaks are unique to each child. Your child may need to go to a quiet location for a few minutes to rest or may need to participate in a more physical activity.

h. **Close Captioned Videos**: The Described and Captioned Media Program (DCMP)To support students who are deaf and hard of hearing, The Described and Captioned Media Program have approved and appropriately captioned videos available for all contents and grade levels.

You can find these materials on every *school media page* by going to the *media page* and *teacher resources*:

- On the left sidebar has a link to Teacher Resources.
- Click on: Digital Tools and Resources
- Click on Video Resources
- DCMP is in the list of Video Resources

i. **Text to Speech**: Read Write Extension/EquatIO This tool will be available to all students. Read Write Extension supports reading and writing access through Google Chrome with features such as text to speech and highlighting. EquatIO is the read write extension for mathematics.
This fact sheet outlines States’ responsibilities to English learners (ELs) and their parents\(^1\) during the extended school closures and, in some cases, the move to remote learning\(^2\) due to the national emergency caused by the novel Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). A local educational agency (LEA) should collaborate with its State educational agency (SEA) and local public health department, as appropriate, in implementing the guidance provided below. This document does not create any rights for any person and does not impose any additional requirements beyond those included in applicable law and regulations. It is intended to provide additional information about requirements in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) and other Federal laws related to ELs in light of COVID-19 and this specific situation.

**Annual ELP Assessment**

1. In a situation where the SEA cannot administer English language proficiency (ELP) assessments in spring 2020 because of school closures due to the COVID-19 national emergency, will the U.S. Department of Education (Department) waive the ESEA requirement to administer ELP assessments to all ELs?

Yes. On March 20, 2020, the Secretary invited requests for waivers of assessment, accountability, and related reporting requirements in the ESEA for the 2019-2020 school year. With respect to assessments specifically, the Secretary invited requests to waive the requirements in Section 1111(b)(2) of ESEA, including the requirement in Section 1111(b)(2)(G) of ESEA to administer an ELP assessment in school year 2019-2020. All SEAs have requested and been granted this waiver for the 2019-2020 school year. Some SEAs have already administered some of their assessments to some of their students, and an SEA may elect to continue administering some portion of their State assessments.

Under the waiver discussed above, an SEA that was unable to complete assessments for all ELs in school year 2019-2020 does not need to administer ELP assessments to the remaining ELs who were not assessed this year. If an SEA was unable to complete assessing all ELs in the school year 2019-2020, the SEA has the option to administer the ELP test in the fall of 2020, where possible, consistent with the State’s ELP exit procedures. For specific questions relating to exit procedures tied to the annual ELP assessment, please see the section below on “Exit

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\(^1\) The term “parent” includes a legal guardian or other person standing *in loco parentis* (such as a grandparent or stepparent with whom the child lives, or a person who is legally responsible for the child’s welfare). (Section 8101(38) of ESEA).

\(^2\) In this document the term “remote learning” and “distance learning” are used interchangeably and for purposes of this document the terms mean the transmission of educational or instructional programming to geographically dispersed individuals and groups via telecommunications. (Section 8101(14) of ESEA).
Procedures.” All States are required to administer ELP assessments in the 2020-2021 school year.

2. How should an SEA that receives a waiver of the requirement to administer the ELP assessment make decisions regarding the instruction and placement of ELs without data from the ELP assessment?

An SEA and its local educational agencies (LEAs) typically use the annual ELP assessment to inform instruction and placement of ELs, in addition to decisions on exiting students from EL status. If the SEA could not complete the annual ELP assessment for some or all of its ELs, the SEA and its LEAs could schedule the ELP assessment if schools reopen in the 2019-2020 school year or early in the 2020-2021 school year, if possible, in order to use ELP assessment results for instruction and placement decisions, as well as for exit determinations. If that is not possible, an LEA could use other resources to make instructional and placement decisions for its ELs when school resumes. Some LEAs may use formative assessments and/or EL specialists and teacher input to help inform instruction and placement decisions. For example, if an LEA normally uses a team comprised of EL specialists and content teachers to determine when an EL no longer needs a sheltered classroom setting and can be placed in content classrooms with support from an EL teacher, the LEA can continue to do so, either during remote operation in the 2019-2020 school year or in-person or remotely during the 2020-2021 school year. For exit from EL status in the absence of the annual ELP assessment, see the section below on exit procedures.

For those students for whom the SEA has ELP assessment data from the 2019-2020 school year, the SEA should use those results to inform instruction, placement, and exit of ELs. Note, however, that it may be the case that some ELs’ English proficiency may have decreased since they were assessed because they may have experienced limited instruction for an extended time during the school closures. Therefore, schools should closely monitor ELs, including those students who have been exited from EL status based on the 2019-2020 ELP assessment, to evaluate whether such students need additional services or should be re-classified as ELs.

**Entrance Requirements**

3. If a student moves into a new LEA that is currently closed due to the COVID-19 national emergency, must staff at the enrolling LEA screen the student for EL identification within 30 days?

If an LEA’s schools are physically closed and it is not providing any educational services to students, there is no obligation to screen new students for EL status. However, if the LEA is operating via remote learning, the LEA must screen new students to determine EL status to the extent possible. Sections 1112(e)(3) and 3113(b)(2) of ESEA require that students be identified for EL status within 30 days of enrollment in a school in a State; for students who enroll after the beginning of the school year, the LEA must send the required parent notice within two weeks of a student being placed in a language instruction educational program (LIEP).

However, the Department recognizes that, during the COVID-19 national emergency, many facilities are physically closed, including those normally used for registration and screening. An
LEA that is continuing to enroll new students during the COVID-19 national emergency should attempt to identify ELs remotely to the greatest extent possible. For example, the LEA’s online registration process could include a home language survey for parents, and the LEA may be able to conduct a version of its screening assessment online. Funds received under the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSERF) or the Governor’s Emergency Education Relief Fund (GEERF) of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act), enacted on March 27, 2020, can generally be used for these purposes.

An LEA may also communicate with parents by telephone, with interpreters as needed, to conduct an oral home language survey in the parent’s native language to identify potential ELs and may explain to parents orally the information required by Section 1112(e)(3) of ESEA to be included in the parent notice in order to start providing EL services remotely to those students. When the school physically reopens, the LEA would complete the full identification procedures to promptly ensure proper identification and placement for new ELs.

4. May an LEA presumptively identify an EL based on an oral home language survey alone, even if the statewide standardized entrance procedures require additional criteria (e.g., a screener assessment) for identification?

The Department recognizes that extended school closures have made it difficult for SEAs to implement their statewide, standardized entrance procedures. SEAs and LEAs may need to adjust their statewide, standardized entrance procedures temporarily to allow for the use of available online resources and other options (see question 3 above) to identify EL students as quickly as possible in order to start services for those students. SEAs and LEAs could apply temporary entrance procedures that permit the presumption of EL identification based on a home language survey and rely on appropriate follow up, including but not limited to, discussion with parents and/or students (as appropriate) in order to provide needed language services, if the alternative is failing to provide any English language services to students in need of them. An SEA must ensure statewide communication of, and maintain documentation of, any temporary change in its entrance procedures for the 2019-2020 school year due to the COVID-19 national emergency.

Providing Services to ELs

5. Must an LEA providing remote learning provide language instruction services to ELs?

Yes, if an LEA is providing remote learning for its students, the LEA must provide language instruction services to ELs. However, during the COVID-19 national emergency, the Department recognizes that physical school closures may affect how services are provided to ELs. EL services may be provided virtually, online, or via telephone. The Department understands that,

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4 See question E-1 of the 2016 EL guidance, found at https://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/essa/essatitleiiguideenglishlearners2016.pdf, and Section 1112(e)(3) of ESEA.
5 These responses to questions under this section pertain only to the current exceptional circumstances created by COVID-19, including this period of rapid transition to remote learning.
during this national emergency, schools may not be able to provide all services in the same manner they are typically provided.

The Department recommends that during remote learning, EL teachers continue to provide instruction to students who were previously in self-contained EL classrooms or in pull-out models. For classes in which ELs participated in mainstream classrooms with both a content teacher and an EL teacher, the EL teacher should continue to collaborate with the content teacher to ensure that the appropriate supports and accommodations are provided to the ELs in that class through remote learning. Additionally, during remote learning, teachers should continue to provide appropriate supports and accommodations to EL students who were previously in mainstream classrooms with only a content teacher to the greatest extent possible.

The Department encourages parents, educators, and administrators to collaborate creatively to continue to meet the needs of ELs. Consider practices such as remote instruction, telephone calls, meetings held on digital platforms, online options for data tracking, and documentation of services, supports, and accommodations provided. In addition, an LEA might consider non-technology-based strategies, such as providing instructional packets or assigning projects and written assignments to EL students. In each instance, the Department recommends continuity in providing language services to ELs to the greatest extent possible under the current circumstances.

6. If operating remotely, what is the minimum number of hours or days in a week that an LEA or school must provide English language services to ELs?

Under the ESEA, there is no particular program or method of instruction for EL students that is required, nor is there a standard amount of time that must be allocated to English language services. Further, the Department recognizes that the determination of how EL services are to be provided may need to be different during the COVID-19 national emergency. Please see also the response to question 5.

7. Must an LEA that is operating remotely provide language accommodations for ELs in content classes?

Yes. The LEA is required to provide language accommodations for ELs for content classes that are held remotely. Many accommodations may be effectively provided online. These may include, for example, extensions of time for assignments, videos with captioning or embedded interpreting, accessible or translated reading materials, other language services provided through video conferencing, an online translation dictionary, or other technological solutions. Funds under Title III of ESEA can be used for that purpose, provided they do not supplant State, local, or other Federal funds (see “Use of Title III Funds” section below). Funds received under the ESSERF or the GEERF of the CARES Act can generally be used for these purposes and are not subject to supplement- not- supplant requirements.

Although Federal law requires meaningful access to remote instruction, it does not mandate specific methodologies for providing that access. Where technology itself poses a barrier to access or where educational materials simply are not available in an accessible format, educators
may still meet their legal obligations by providing ELs equally effective alternate access to the curriculum or services provided to other students. In some cases, this may be accomplished, for example, through hard copy packets, teacher check-ins, or tutorials.

8. How can an LEA continuing to provide instruction remotely ensure that ELs have access to grade-level content in a platform without typical scaffolds and supports?

See response to question 7. SEAs, LEAs, schools, and teachers should use all available resources to meet EL students’ needs while operating remotely. If the LEA’s platform does not provide the EL supports it typically provides to its students, groups of educators could work together to craft relevant tools and resources for EL students. If remote education is continuing, ELs must receive appropriate language services and supports to the greatest extent possible.

9. Is an LEA required to continue to provide a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to ELs with disabilities during a school closure due to the COVID-19 national emergency?

If an LEA continues to provide educational opportunities to the general student population during a school closure, the school must ensure that ELs with disabilities also have equal access to the same opportunities, including the provision of FAPE. SEAs, LEAs, and schools must ensure that, to the greatest extent possible, each student with a disability, including each EL with a disability, can be provided the special education and related services identified in the student’s individualized education program (IEP) developed under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), or a plan developed under Section 504. The following resources outline a state’s responsibility to infants, toddlers, and children with disabilities and their families, and to the staff serving these children. As additional resources become available they will be posted at www.ed.gov/coronavirus.

- Supplemental Fact Sheet (Español) Addressing Serving Children with Disabilities during COVID-19 national emergency (March 21, 2020) [available at: https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/frontpage/faq/rr/policyguidance/Supple%20Fact%20Sheet%203.21.20%20FINAL.pdf].

10. Must an LEA operating remotely continue to provide equitable services to eligible ELs enrolled in private schools?

Yes, the LEA has an obligation to provide equitable services to eligible private school ELs and their teachers as agreed upon during the consultation process between LEAs and private school officials (Section 8501 of ESEA). However, due to school closures, additional consultation with private school officials may be required to determine if there are potential barriers to students receiving services via remote learning and how such barriers might be overcome. This discussion

6 See the regulations for Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504) at 34 CFR §§ 104.4, 104.33; and the regulations for Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act at 28 CFR § 35.130.

7 See the IDEA regulations at 34 CFR §§ 300.101, 300.201; and the Section 504 regulations at 34 CFR § 104.33.
might also include the option of temporarily suspending equitable services during school closures. Services could then resume once schools reopen and possibly extend into the summer. If funds allocated for equitable services in the 2019-2020 school year remain unobligated they must be carried over to provide services in the next academic year in addition to services the students otherwise would receive based on the 2020-2021 school year allocation.

**Use of Title III Funds**

11. If an LEA is providing remote learning, may funds under Title III of ESEA provide support for ELs by purchasing software for ELs in the content areas, or would that be considered supplanting?

The supplement-not-supplant requirement applies to funds under Title III of ESEA even when an LEA is conducting remote learning. However, while schools are operating via remote learning, Title III funds may be used to supplement the basic instruction or support that must be provided to ELs (i.e., to supplement the LIEP). For example, if an LEA purchases software for high school reading/language arts courses that includes embedded supports for ELs, such as pop-up translations or images to support instruction, then for those ELs in those courses, this could provide their “core” LIEP due to the embedded supports, and Title III funds could not be used for that software. The LEA may, however, choose to supplement, using Title III funds, that coursework with additional online resources and software for ELs or it may wish to add an EL support teacher, using Title III funds, to provide online support or support via telephone calls to students for additional assistance.

12. If an LEA provides for internet access, hotspots, and tablets or other devices for low-income students who do not have access to technology, may Title III funds provide similar resources for those low-income students who are ELs to enable their internet access?

No. If an LEA provides remote learning for everyone, including internet access or educational technology for low-income students, then the LEA cannot use Title III funds for that purpose for the low-income students who are ELs, because that would violate the supplement-not-supplant requirement in section 3115(g) of ESEA. The LEA may use Title III funds for supplemental hardware or software that is designed specifically for ELs (e.g., software to provide language accessibility features or tools) and that supplement the LIEP.

For general internet access and educational technology to other students, States and LEAs should use State, local, and other Federal funds to provide the same access for ELs. For example, recipients of subgrants under the CARES Act ESSERF and GEERF can generally use those grants for student internet access and devices to enable online learning as well as accessible technology for ELs with disabilities, among other uses of funds. While short-term connectivity support may be necessary in some situations, the Department encourages SEAs and LEAs to consider ways to invest CARES Act funds in technology infrastructure and professional services.

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8 Section 3115(g) of ESEA requires Federal funds made available under Title III to be used to supplement the level of Federal, State, and local public funds that, in the absence of such availability, would have been expended for programs for ELs and immigrant children and youth and in no case to supplant such Federal, State, and local public funds.
development and training that will improve long-term capacity for remote learning. Information on using Federal education funds to support technology can be found at https://tech.ed.gov/funding/ and https://oese.ed.gov/offices/office-of-formula-grants/safe-supportive-schools/student-support-and-academic-enrichment-program/. In addition, the following are examples of Department programs under the ESEA that provide funds that may be used to support access to devices for students (e.g., tablets, computers) and mobile hotspot devices and data plans:

- Title IV, Part A, Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants (SSAE),
- Title V, Part B, Subpart 1, Small, Rural School Achievement Program (SRSA);
- Title V, Part B, Subpart 2, Rural and Low-Income School Program (RLIS);
- Sections 7002 and 7003(b), Impact Aid; and
- Section 4624, Promise Neighborhoods.

Note that the allowability of costs is always situation- and program-specific. For that reason, if an LEA decides to use funds under one of these programs for costs related to device or mobile hotspot access, the LEA must be sure that the use of the funds is, under the specific circumstances of the expenditure and the program authority selected, reasonable and necessary for the purposes of that program, and does not violate other program requirements, such as supplement-not-supplant, if applicable. While funds under these programs may be used on device or mobile hotspot access in some appropriate circumstances, each program’s purpose is not primarily focused on that issue.

13. May Title III funds be used to train teachers to use new online platforms and software designed for ELs? Does that training need to be limited to training EL teachers or may the LEA include all teachers who have ELs in their classes?

An LEA may use Title III funds for teacher training if it is specific to EL needs. The training could include all teachers if it is geared towards meeting the needs of ELs or if it relates to software or embedded supports for ELs. However, if the training is for the same online platform that all teachers will use for all classes, and does not address EL needs, then the use of Title III funds for such training would be not be permitted, as it would be supplanting, rather than supplementing, other available funding sources. For more information about the ability to use Title III funds to provide supplemental supports for ELs, see the response to question 11.

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9 Section 4109(b) of ESEA requires that, for LEAs receiving $30,000 or more in Title IV, Part A funds, no more than 15 percent of those funds for activities to support the effective use of technology may be used “for purchasing technology infrastructure.” Under the authority in section 3511 of the CARES Act, on April 3, 2020, the Secretary invited a waiver of this 15 percent spending limitation and subsequently approved a waiver in all 50 States, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the Bureau of Indian Education.
Exit Procedures

14. If an LEA is not able to complete the ELP assessment for all ELs in spring 2020, should all ELs be kept in EL status for the fall, even if some of them may be proficient in English according to their teachers? May an LEA exit such students without administering the ELP assessment?

An LEA may not exit an EL from EL status unless the student has demonstrated proficiency on a valid and reliable assessment that includes the four domains of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. There is an exception for an EL with a disability whose disability makes it impossible for the student to be assessed in a particular domain because there are no appropriate accommodations for assessing the student in that domain; such an EL can be exited from EL status based on the student’s score on the remaining domains in which the student was assessed.\(^{10}\)

An LEA that is not able to complete its ELP assessment for all ELs during the 2019-2020 school year due to the COVID-19 national emergency may elect to try to complete that ELP testing in the fall of 2020 when possible. Doing so may assist the LEA in implementing ELP exit procedures. If assessing ELs in the fall is not possible, an LEA should give particular attention to individualized determinations for the instruction and placement of each EL when schools reopen. Note, however, that it may be the case that an EL’s English proficiency may have decreased because they may have experienced limited instruction for an extended time during the school closures. Therefore, schools should closely monitor each EL to evaluate whether they need additional EL supports. For example, an EL that may have been close to proficient in spring may need more English language development supports than the student was receiving immediately before the school’s closure to ensure access to the general curriculum. An EL at the lower end of the proficiency spectrum may also have lost some English language skills during the COVID-19 national emergency and may need additional supports.

15. If an SEA has additional requirements for exit in addition to the ELP assessment (e.g., a teacher rubric) may the SEA change its exit procedures and exit ELs based only on the ELP assessment during the COVID-19 national emergency?

Yes, due to the extended school closures caused by the COVID-19 national emergency, an SEA may adjust its statewide exit procedures for the 2019-2020 school year to eliminate any additional criteria beyond the ELP assessment. An SEA may want to consider this option if, for example, it used teacher input as an additional exit criterion, but it expects that many of the teachers may be unavailable to complete such input when schools reopen because they have moved to a new school or LEA. In this situation, the SEA could instruct all LEAs to exit students based on the proficient score on the spring 2020 ELP assessment only (if it has that data). When the SEA administers the ELP assessment in spring 2021 on the State’s usual schedule, the SEA would revert to the SEA’s usual exit procedures that include other measures. By adjusting its statewide exit procedures temporarily to include only the ELP assessment, the SEA would help to ensure that a student in EL status who is proficient in English is able to exit, especially if, by not exiting, the student would be denied access to the full curriculum, e.g., by being in a self-

\(^{10}\) See 34 C.F.R. § 200.6 (h)(4)(ii).
contained classroom. An LEA should give careful consideration to the individualized EL instructional and placement decisions when schools reopen, to ensure that all ELs are receiving services appropriate for their EL needs (see questions 2 and 14 above). An SEA must ensure statewide communication of, and maintain documentation of, any temporary change in its exit procedures for the 2019-2020 school year due to the COVID-19 national emergency.

Parents of ELs

16. How should SEAs and LEAs ensure meaningful communication with parents of ELs in a language and format they can understand and access?

SEAs and LEAs have an obligation to ensure meaningful communication with parents of ELs in a language they can understand and to adequately notify limited English proficient (LEP) parents of information about any program, service, or activity of an SEA or LEA that is called to the attention of non-LEP parents. Many LEAs are sending crucial information to parents during this time regarding, for example, the expectations for parents to pick up or set up new technology, new enrollment protocols, and how to support their students at home. SEAs and LEAs should consider all possible methods in order to ensure meaningful communication with LEP parents of all students, including EL students. For example, an LEA should translate all mailings and emails to parents to ensure parents have access to the information in a language they understand. For parents who are not literate, some LEAs are using recorded telephone calls that go to families, which include several different recorded language options that parents can choose, but these recorded telephone calls should be developed carefully to help ensure that they are understandable. SEAs and LEAs can generally use CARES Act funds under the ESSERF and GEERF for communications with parents, including translation and interpretation services.

For information on various uses of Title III funds for parent and family engagement, see question E-4 of the 2016 EL guidance.11

Resources


If you have questions for the U.S. Department of Education related to school closures and Covid-19, please email us at COVID-19@ed.gov.

If you have questions for the Office for Civil Rights (OCR), want additional information or technical assistance, or believe that a school is violating federal civil rights law, call your regional office or visit the website of the U.S. Department of Education’s OCR at

www.ed.gov/ocr. You may contact OCR at (800) 421-3481 (TDD: 800-877-8339), at ocr@ed.gov, or contact OCR’s Outreach, Prevention, Education and Non-discrimination (OPEN) Center at OPEN@ed.gov. You may also fill out a complaint form online at www.ed.gov/ocr/complaintintro.html.
Compliance and Regulatory Guidance
Sources: Maryland’s Recovery Plan for Education
MSDE Title III Guidelines
United States Department of Education EL Fact Sheet

Compliance Considerations for English Learners

English learner (ELs) programs fall under the purview of Title III. Title III provides guidance on instructional programs.

MSDE Recovery Plan for EL

The Maryland Recovery Plan for Education (Maryland State Department of Education [MSDE], 2020) offers the following guidance on English learner programs’ return to school:

- Systems must collaborate with central office English learner teams prior to instituting a revised curriculum
- EL teachers will collaborate with mainstream teachers to provide equitable access
- The system’s plan must include plans to address equity and the unique learning needs of EL students
- Further, instructional programs for ELs should include the following:
  - Provide small group and individual support based on each EL’s needs
  - Facilitate collaboration and co-planning between content and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) teachers
  - Use scaffolding instructional strategies
  - Focus on developing productive language skills such as speaking and writing
  - Use formative assessments to identify gaps
  - Develop digital opportunities for review and recover
  - Provide office hours to touch base with individual ELs when needed

Title III Guidelines during COVID19 Related Closures and Distance Learning

The following guidelines and recommendations have been adapted from the U.S. Department of Education’s Fact Sheet titled Providing Services to English Learners During the COVID-19 Outbreak (Office of Elementary and Secondary Education [OESE], 2020).

**Enrollment.** Systems engaging in distance learning must screen new students to determine EL status to the extent possible (OESE, 2020). Enrollment and identification procedures should:

- Use a home language survey to identify potential EL students for provisional EL status
- Notify parents of potential eligibility for EL services
- When schools reopen, the system may complete the full identification process to promptly ensure proper identification and placement for new EL students

**Instructional programs and staff.** EL students are entitled to EL programs with sufficient resources to ensure the programs are effectively implemented, including highly qualified teachers, support staff, and appropriate instructional materials. Systems engaging in distance learning must continue to provide language instruction services to EL students (OESE, 2020). The United States Department of Education provides the following recommendations regarding EL services during distance learning:

- EL teachers continue to provide instruction to students who were previously in self-contained EL classrooms or in pull-out models
- For classes in which ELs participated in mainstream classrooms with both a content teacher and an EL teacher, the EL teacher should continue to collaborate with the content teacher
- Additionally, during remote learning, teachers should continue to provide appropriate supports and
accommodations to EL students who were previously in mainstream classrooms with only a content teacher to the greatest extent possible
- Accommodations may include extensions of time for assignments, videos with captioning or embedded interpreting, accessible or translated reading materials, other language services provided through video conferencing, an online translation dictionary, or other technological solutions
  - In FCPS, these resources may include Google Read/Write, synchronous video conferencing via Google meet, captioned videos, accessible and adapted texts, and more

**Family and community engagement.** English learners’ parents are entitled to meaningful communication in a language they can understand, such as the use of translated materials or a language interpreter, and to adequate notice of information about any program, service, or activity that is called to the attention of non-LEP parents (Every Student Succeeds Act [ESSA], 2015). Considerations should be given to parents who do not speak English and who may lack literacy in their home language (OESE, 2020). FCPS will continue to offer meaningful communication to EL families through the use of:
  - Interpreting and translation services
  - Technology tools (including TalkingPoints and the Language Line)
  - Video and audio resources for families with literacy needs
  - Further, the Maryland Recovery Plan (MSDE, 2020) recommends the following:
    - Provide documents to families of ELs in an accessible format, including translated documents and talking points
    - Build in time for translation in order to provide timely communication
    - Consider personal check-ins with ELs and families, using an interpreter if needed
    - Explore strategies to increase the access and understanding of families to online instruction and resources
    - Provide support for the social emotional needs of ELs and families

Any model for instruction and returns to schooling must incorporate the aforementioned supports and procedures relevant to EL instruction and programming. Schools must ensure equitable access to content learning for ELs and provide the appropriate accommodations and supports. Further, schools must follow established procedures and recommendations to ensure communication between EL families and schools as well as procedures for identifying EL students.

### Instructional Models

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Considerations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1 day a week F2F rotation | ● Support needed for teachers to meet the needs of students in both virtual and in person instruction  
  ● Consider adding 1 to 2 co-teachers to this model to support online instruction |
| 2 days a week F2F rotation | ● Support needed for teachers to meet the needs of students in both virtual and in person instruction  
  ● Consider class sizes that vary by school sites; 50% of the population at |
some schools will still be too high capacity for required physical distancing

| A/B week rotation | ● Consider class sizes that vary by school sites; 50% of the population at some schools will still be too high capacity for required physical distancing  
  ● Using EL teachers to reduce class sizes may risk Title III compliance with EL students receiving services from an EL teacher |

| Elementary F2F and Secondary Distance learning | ● Secondary students with unique learning and educational needs  
  ○ English learner students benefit from interaction  
  ○ Online learning not conducive to the needs of students with beginning level ELP scores (1.0-2.9) |

| Elementary students spread across elementary and middle schools four days a week F2F until relaxation of social distancing rules | ● Consider accessibility of the physical environment for small children  
  ● Consider allowing secondary students who meet certain criteria (dual identified, homeless, low language level, newcomer EL) to access learning in a face to face environment even if other secondary student populations continue to engage in distance learning  
  ● Secondary students with unique learning and educational needs  
  ○ English learner students benefit from interaction  
  ○ Online learning not conducive to the needs of students with beginning level ELP |

**General considerations for all models:**
- Density of housing for many EL families may indicate higher levels of exposure and risk for contracting COVID-19  
  ○ Special consideration should be given to limit the exposure of vulnerable student populations who have been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19  
- Siblings across different levels/models of instruction  
  ○ Every attempt should be made to limit the burden on families during this time; recommendations should be reasonable and should consider family complexity factors  
- Technology access (1:1 access needed for students)  
- ‘Caseload’ for teachers to manage and support online and in-person learning  
  ○ Consider adopting instructional cohort to share resources  
- No use of water fountains or cafeteria spaces; social distancing in classrooms during lunch times  
- If wearing masks  
  ○ Small group instruction for speech services or phonological awareness (we need to see children’s’ mouths)  
  ○ How can teachers keep students’ masks on during the day?  
  ○ What are the updated policies around touch, first aid, support with tasks like tying shoes or fastening buttons for younger children, etc.?  
- Strategic grouping for flexible models (A/B, etc.)  
  ○ Interventions  
  ○ Learning needs  
  ○ Geographic location  
  ○ English learner status and ELP level
Professional Learning

Guidance from MD Recovery Plan (MSDE, 2020)

- All staff should be trained on delivering instruction via digital platforms
- All staff should be trained on designing equitable instruction for both virtual and in-person learning environments
- FCPS should consider using our LSS (Schoology) to deliver professional learning to model effective instruction using Schoology
- FCPS should offer professional learning during the day to ensure equitable access for teachers

EL professional learning will incorporate the tenets of effective professional learning as established by research on adult learning and effective PL in education organizations. Research on effective PL suggests that high quality professional learning is: active, coherent, of sustained duration, and includes collective participation (Martin, Kragler, Quatroche, & Bauserman, 2014). The PL offerings in this plan aim to achieve those core features of effective PL though the following:

- Active learning- EL PL will include opportunities for teachers to apply learning from sessions to their practice and include activities beyond listening to lecture. All sessions will be relevant, engaging, and applicable in the distance learning setting
- Coherence- PL sessions will align EL best practice to system initiatives and priorities
- Sustained Duration- EL PL will occur regularly throughout the year to sustain learning, and will be offered using a variety of delivery methods to ensure equitable access to learning for teachers in a distance learning environment
- Collective Participation- EL PL groupings will allow teachers from similar grade levels and content areas to build an interactive learning community and engage in collaboration.

By establishing PL that is actively engaging, coherent, collaborative, and of sustained duration, the EL central office can align their PL offerings for the 2021 school year with research on effective PL and better meet student and teacher needs in support of the FCPS EL program.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Audience</th>
<th>Professional Learning Recommendations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English Learner Teachers</td>
<td>• Supporting students’ social/emotional needs upon re-entry into the learning environment or in a distance learning setting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Effective strategies for supporting English learners in online learning environments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Hold virtual EL teacher cohorts three times per year to receive explicit training on effective instruction for ELs, second language acquisition theory, and mind-brain education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mainstream and Content Teachers</td>
<td>• Supporting students’ social/emotional needs upon re-entry into the learning environment or in a distance learning setting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(K-12)</td>
<td>• Scaffolds and accommodations for English learners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Offer virtual professional learning in hyperdoc PL, synchronous sessions, or webinars on using SIOP to support EL students in content learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>○ SIOP leadership team supports</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Ongoing SIOP PL for specific schools
- SIOP in an online learning environment
- Offer ongoing professional learning on meeting the needs of secondary-aged EL students (for secondary audiences)
  - Include PL opportunities that focus on supporting older EL students in the distance learning environment

General considerations:
- Provide engaging, relevant professional learning in a virtual format
  - Synchronous professional learning via Google meet
  - Hyperdocs and playlists
  - Screencasts and webinar recordings
- Offer flexible professional learning options for teachers that are:
  - Conducive to varied schedules
  - Relevant to specific school and student needs
  - Applicable to a distance learning environment
- Model effective distance learning methods to ensure that PL is relevant and coherent (Martin et al., 2014)
  - Use the system’s established distance learning platform (Schoology) to provide PL for teachers (MSDE, 2020)
  - Offer flexible times and platforms for teachers to engage in PL (MSDE, 2020)

Timeline for Ongoing Professional Learning:
In some flexible learning models (e.g. AA/BB day model) teachers will receive one day per week to engage in ongoing professional learning (MSDE, 2020). Professional learning options for EL should therefore be offered on an ongoing basis throughout the 2021 academic year. The following timeline offers one model for providing ongoing professional learning regarding ELs and distance learning.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q1</th>
<th>Q2</th>
<th>Q3</th>
<th>Q4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>August - November</td>
<td>November - January</td>
<td>January - April</td>
<td>April - June</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Essential Support Structures

Logistics
● Classrooms, frequently touched areas disinfected between each set of students attend
  ○ AA (CLEAN) BB
  ○ A week (CLEAN) B week
  ○ A day F2F (CLEAN) B day F2F (CLEAN) C day F2F (CLEAN)
● All bathrooms must have staggered use with large plastic guards installed between sinks
● Install bathroom doors that can be pushed to enter and pushed to exit to minimize need to pull handles with hands
● Large population bus stops must have multiple buses with staggered pick up/drop off times, available for pick up/drop off to practice social distancing for students and drivers
● If a child comes to school sick develop a protocol to transport child home
● Assign an extra adult to each bus to supervise and enforce social distancing
● No use of water fountains - supply disposable water bottles if students do not bring one from home
● Elementary school: each student has a bin with manipulatives assigned for the entire year
● No books checked out from the library; supply e-books to be accessed by chromebook or ipad
● Convert unused media center to classrooms for social distancing
● Meals will be eaten at individual desks in the classroom (brought from home or provided by school)
● All meals must be completely disposable
● Elementary: each desk has a sealable bin next to it for coats, gloves, hats, lunches, backpack, etc. to be stored while child is in classroom--no use of cubbies
● Health technician or school nurse will deliver daily medication to students - students will not travel to health room to retrieve medicine
● The health room will be for sick children only

Instructional Technology
● All students grade Pre-K-12 have a chromebook
● Every teacher (TOR, EL, and Special Education) has a working laptop with a camera
● All classrooms have working smart boards or computers with projection capabilities to allow teachers easy access to multiple digital resources and digital curriculum to keep students engaged and learning
● School supplies for each student will be in individual bins - no sharing of supplies
● High school textbooks assigned to student will be sanitized between semesters before assigning to next student

Communication
● All communication is digital with exception of parents/guardians that do not have access to digital communication tools
● Families with secondary students: Communication comes out at one time, in one consistent platform, in one message from all teachers and school staff
● Families with elementary students: teacher communication is aligned to school communication to reduce the number of messages families receive in one week

COVID Communication
● If a staff member or student exhibits symptoms of COVID then a standardized message must be sent out to the community
  ○ Must protect the identity of the student
  ○ If it is a staff member then the students’ families must be informed but attempt to protect the identity/privacy of the staff member
## Special Considerations for High School

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem</th>
<th>Solution</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beginning March 16, 2020 all new enrollments that indicated a language other than English on their enrollment form, were enrolled on an EL provisional status due to the closure of face-to-face language placement assessments.</td>
<td>As students come back to school in a face-to-face environment provisional EL students will need to be given the language placement assessment to determine language level thus ensuring correct scheduling. The EL Language Assessment Specialist, the EL Registrar, and the site-based EL Department Chair must prioritize the testing. EL Registrar adjusts provisional status to Y or TO base on language assessment data.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reliable internet access</td>
<td>Put high capacity hot spots on school buses. Park them in areas where there are high concentrations of families who have accessibility issues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comcast Essentials and Verizon require social security numbers to sign up for the free accounts. Families do not want to share that sensitive information.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FCPS requires 25 credits for students to graduate from high school. If the high school model reduces the number of credits a student can earn in one semester then EL students who are older, have fewer credits due to SIFE status, language acquisition needs, etc. will be negatively impacted in a significant way.</td>
<td>Consider aligning FCPS graduation requirements with MSDE graduation requirements of 21 credits: AACPS = 26 credits, CCPS = 25 credits, BCPS = 21 credits, HCPS = 21 credits, MCPS = 22 credits, PGCPS = 21 credits, WCPS = 24 credits.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical support from FCPS is only in English, our families call in for technical support and they are either put off or it takes a long time to receive support due to linguistic barriers.</td>
<td>Put a bilingual staff member in the technical support department; they don’t necessarily need to know all of the tech, they can translate for the technical expert; this will expedite the process of solving our family’s technical issues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Families are overwhelmed with communication from multiple teachers, departments, offices, administration, school system, etc.</td>
<td>Assign all high school EL students to EL case managers (EL teachers). The case manager (EL teacher) can combine communications into a single message and disseminate the information. It will come from one source and in one location reducing confusion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unaccompanied youth, newcomers, SIFE students relied heavily on peer support to navigate the school system, classes, and assignments.</td>
<td>Ask for bilingual students or RELs to earn service hours through support. Assign Support students to small groups of newcomers, have them check in and answer questions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Higher language level (3.8-4.4) EL students struggle with mainstream assignments and have difficulty or are reluctant to reach out to mainstream teachers for help. Ask honor society students to earn service hours through a digital platform by assisting these students with their work and projects. Assign 2 honor society students to each core content area (Biology, Algebra 1 & 2, Modern World) to support EL students. Pay staff members work shop pay to be accessible during evening hours for working EL students. They can assist with their homework and clarify misunderstandings.

All students who receive the word-to-word dictionary accommodation will require their own bilingual dictionary. We will need more dictionaries for older students who currently rely on class sets. We can shift existing dictionaries from elementary schools to high schools to provide more copies and supplement where needed by purchasing more.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CDC Guidelines for Secondary Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CDC Recommendations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seating/desks at least 6 feet apart facing in the same direction. If using tables, spaced 6 feet apart with students sitting on one side only.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimize sharing of high touch materials to extent possible or limit use by one group at a time and clean and disinfect between use.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoid the sharing of electronic devices or learning aids.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student and staff groups should be static as possible (Cohorting)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teach and reinforce hand hygiene and the use of cloth face coverings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health hygiene supplies available: soap, hand sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol for older children that can safely use hand sanitizer), paper towels, disinfectant wipes, cloth face coverings (as feasible).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individually labeled containers, cubbies, or areas to keep student’s belongings separated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces and objects in classroom</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Monitor absenteeism | Consider phone calls home to confirm reason for absenteeism  
If COVID related, be prepared to message teacher, class, and community (consider having a standardized message from FCPS for such events)  
Consider moving to distance learning during cold and flu season |
| Cloth face covering worn by staff and students (as feasible) especially when physical distancing is difficult | Provide face coverings for students and teachers who cannot provide their own. This is especially important for low-income students who may not be able to purchase a mask for their use. |
Integrated Content and Language Instruction

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Integrated content and language instruction has entered its third decade and by many accounts is flourishing in both foreign language and second language instructional settings (Crandall, 1987; Krashen, 1982; Mohan, 1986; Mohan, Leung, & Davison, 2001; Snow, 2005; Stoller, 2004). Broadly defined, it is task-based instruction and assessment of knowledge, skills, and academic language within a content area. The academic language includes the concepts, key vocabulary, grammar, and discourse necessary to accomplish content-area tasks.

In preK-12 educational settings in the United States, integrated content and language instruction is an approach to schooling used with bilingual and second language learners, a sector of the population that has been underserved by the educational system (Nieto, 2005; Thomas & Collier, 2002). It offers a way into mainstream classrooms and a promise of success for these learners. The challenge for teachers is to design and deliver lessons that make content comprehensible and that facilitate language acquisition. While this is no small order, we know from research and experience that it is possible to integrate language and content instruction successfully, and that when teachers do so, they have a positive impact on student learning.

Through integrated content and language instruction, second language learners develop the ability to generate thoughtful spoken and written discourse about concepts in a content area, and they develop proficiency in understanding and producing the types of texts specific to that area. Students also develop the ability to carry out other content-related tasks, such as lab experiments, creative mathematical calculations, and historical inquiry. They solve problems, evaluate solutions, and collaborate effectively with one another in these activities through the use of appropriate academic language.

The purpose of this digest is to introduce four key principles of practice found in classrooms in which content and language instruction effectively converge:

1. Clear content and language outcomes are planned for each lesson.
2. Learners are provided with goal-directed opportunities to interact with each other and with the teacher to jointly reflect on and build specific content knowledge and skills.
3. Teachers provide learners with tasks that promote the development of reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills within the content areas.
4. Outcomes are reviewed, consolidated, and assessed during lessons.

Historically, the convergence of content and language instruction stems from the theoretical position that communicative competence (Hymes, 1971) in a second language is facilitated by using the language as a medium for learning content rather than by studying it as a separate and distinct subject area. In an integrated approach, the emphasis on content and language will vary at different times within a lesson and across program models (Shohamy & Inbar, 2006). However, the consistent goal of this instructional approach is to assist second language learners to develop fluency and accuracy in all four language modalities in the context of content-relevant tasks and in the service of building mastery of a body of content knowledge (Gibbons, 2002). Teachers can help ensure that their learners gain proficiency in language skills and master content knowledge by incorporating into their classroom instruction the four principles of practice listed above. The remainder of this digest is devoted to an illustration of these principles.

Planning Clear Content and Language Outcomes for a Lesson

To prepare clear content and language outcomes, teachers draw on a variety of resources that include standards of knowledge and skills in a content area, language proficiency standards, prior student performance assessments, and available course materials.

For example, a mathematics teacher would prepare an integrated content and language lesson by first examining the mathematics standards to determine the concept and skill to be learned, and then selecting course content, tasks, and materials appropriate to the students as determined by assessments of student performance. For instance, in planning to teach the concept of quadratic equations, a teacher might construct the following possible outcome statements: Students will be able to solve quadratic equations, discuss different methods of solving the same quadratic equations, and write a summary of each method. Solve, discuss, and write are the descriptive verbs that determine whether a particular outcome addresses the knowledge and skill of a content area or specific language functions. Solving a quadratic equation describes a content outcome, whereas discussing and writing about the methods used to solve a quadratic equation describe language outcomes related to the content.

Focusing strictly on the verbs in lesson objectives risks oversimplifying the complex process of attending to both content skills and language functions. The verbs, however, provide a sound starting point for integrating language and content in instructional planning. When teachers consciously attempt to sort the descriptive verbs used in standards documents and course materials into separately identified language
and content outcomes, there are at least two key benefits. First, the teachers clarify for themselves the separate content and language foci of the lesson, which can improve their delivery of the instruction. Second, if these foci are both explicitly presented and subsequently reviewed within each lesson, students become aware of the separate content and language goals, which may help them direct and monitor their own learning.

Figure 1 presents a partial list of verbs a teacher might consider in lesson planning. Each column of verbs is directly related to either mathematics outcomes or language outcomes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verbs that describe mathematics outcomes</th>
<th>Verbs that describe language outcomes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Solve</td>
<td>Discuss</td>
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<tr>
<td>Compute</td>
<td>Write</td>
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<td>Rank</td>
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<td>Identify</td>
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<td>Graph</td>
<td>Explain</td>
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<tr>
<td>Measure</td>
<td>Read</td>
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**Figure 1.** Verbs that describe content and language outcomes

Content and language outcomes for second language learners at different language proficiency levels will generally need to differ according to the students’ proficiency. Consequently, it will be important to modify tasks and define student grouping configurations in ways that support the growth of all learners.

**Providing Opportunities for Effective Interaction**

Effective interaction gives students multiple opportunities for the goal-directed negotiation of meaning. This is required for effective support of integrated content and language learning for two reasons. First, as they interact and create meaning, students map new content knowledge onto prior content knowledge. They do this through spoken and written discourse. Second, students notice the language used, they retrieve needed language from memory, and they generate new configurations of language through spoken and written discourse with each other and with their teacher. (See Robinson & Ellis, 2008, for a full discussion.)

Research has shown that content-based tasks that involve students in noticing, retrieving, and generating language are effective in facilitating second language acquisition (Long, 1996, 2007). For example, information-gap tasks (Pica, 2005) involve pairs of students in negotiating the meaning of content-area texts and materials (e.g., problems from mathematics, questions from science, issues in social science). In information-gap tasks, two students work together to interpret and understand a text. However, each student receives a version of the text that differs in some key points from the version given to the other. The students must communicate the information they have and resolve the differences to achieve a final, accurate, joint version of the text. Figure 2 presents an example from a biology lesson. The words that differ between the two versions are in bold here, but would not be in bold in the versions given to students.

**Reviewing the Source of Genetic Variation**

Read your paragraphs to each other line by line. Identify the differences between your texts. Discuss reasons for using one word and not another. Don’t show each other your paragraphs. Once you’ve discussed them, work together to write one final version of the paragraph.

**Student A**

*Mitosis* is a type of cell division necessary for sexual reproduction. It is limited to the reproductive cells in the testes, namely the sperm cells, and the reproductive cells on the ovaries, namely the eggs. Meiosis produces *four* reproductive cells, or gametes. These cells contain half the number (diploid) of chromosomes of the mother cell, and the chromosomes are not identical. There are two phases of cell division, meiosis I and meiosis II. Before meiosis begins, each pair of chromosomes replicates while the cell is in its resting phase (prophase). During meiosis I, each set of replicated chromosomes lines up with its homologous pair. The homologous pairs of chromosomes can break and exchange segments during the crossing over process, a source of genetic variation. The homologous pairs of chromosomes separate. The cell then splits into two daughter cells, each containing one pair of the homologous chromosomes.

*Cytokinesis* is the resting period before meiosis II begins.

**Student B**

*Meiosis* is a type of cell division necessary for asexual reproduction. It is limited to the reproductive cells in the testes, namely the sperm cells, and the reproductive cells in the ovaries, namely the eggs. Meiosis produces *two* reproductive cells, or gametes. These cells contain half the number (haploid) of chromosomes of the mother cell, and the chromosomes are not identical. There are two phases of cell division, meiosis I and meiosis II. Before meiosis begins, each pair of chromosomes replicates while the cell is on its resting phase (interphase). During meiosis I, each set of replicated chromosomes lines up with its heterozygous pair. The homologous pairs of chromosomes can break and exchange segments during the crossing over process, a source of genetic variation. The homologous pairs of chromosomes separate. The cell then splits into two daughter cells, each containing one pair of the homologous chromosomes.

*Interkinesis* is the resting period before meiosis II begins.

**Joint Copy**

*Meiosis* is a type of cell division necessary for sexual reproduction. It is limited to the reproductive cells in the testes, namely the sperm cells, and the reproductive cells in the ovaries, namely the eggs. Meiosis produces *four* reproductive cells, or gametes. These cells contain half the number (haploid) of chromosomes of the mother cell, and the chromosomes are not identical. There are two phases of cell division, meiosis I and meiosis II. Before meiosis begins, each pair of chromosomes replicates while the cell is in its resting phase (interphase). During meiosis I, each set of replicated chromosomes lines up with its homologous pair. The homologous pairs of chromosomes can break and exchange segments during the crossing over process, a source of genetic variation. The homologous pairs of chromosomes separate. The cell then splits into two daughter cells, each containing one pair of the homologous chromosomes.

*Interkinesis* is the resting period before meiosis II begins.

**Figure 2.** Information-gap task
In this example, as two second language learners discuss whether mitosis or meiosis is necessary for asexual or sexual reproduction, they begin to notice differences that may not have been salient prior to the discussion, retrieve prior knowledge about this topic, discuss the truth or falsity of the written text, and do all this as they generate utterances in their second language. They also explore the use of the prepositions in and on. Moreover, there are opportunities to repeat, repair, and request clarification of language while they focus on meaning and reach consensus. This sort of intense, goal-directed interaction has its antecedents in second language instruction and research (Pica, Kang, & Sauro, 2006).

Another type of task that provides similar opportunities for second language learners to interact with content-area knowledge and with each other is a dictogloss (Wajnryb, 1990) task. In a dictogloss, students listen to a short talk by a content-area specialist, first for the main idea, then a second time for details. Next, students reconstruct the talk individually. Finally, they discuss their version with a partner or small group and decide on the best version. These are shared with the whole class for a peer-editing session. What students can’t peer-edit, the teacher quickly teaches.

In constructing task materials for both information-gap and dictogloss tasks, teachers draw on textbooks and seminar works or primary sources from their field of study so that students learn to grapple with a range of discourse styles. Through these processes, teachers and students begin to develop sensitivity for the textual demands of a variety of texts within a content area. (See Schleppegrell, Achugar, & Oteiza, 2004, for one way of developing this in a history course.)

**Promoting the Development and Integration of Reading, Writing, Listening, and Speaking**

To address the practice of integrating reading, writing, listening, and speaking, teachers must identify and work with students on two sets of discourse skills—one specific to a subject area, the other general to many areas. Some examples of discourse that are content-area specific are algebraic problems, geometry proofs, experimental studies, newspaper items, poetry, history, community surveys, and interviews. Those that are generic include summary, comparison, and outline. Teachers then provide opportunities for students to improve all four skills—reading, writing, listening, and speaking—across a variety of text types, including some specific to their subject area and others that are generic.

Text-based tasks can be integrated into cooperative learning jigsaws (Aronson, Blaney, Stephin, Sikes, & Snapp, 1978), where students become experts on topics through texts that they read or listen to, take notes on, and teach to peers. Writing workshops, book study sections, student presentations, and student panels have been part of language arts classes and are encouraged in science, math, social studies, art, and music. Other approaches such as writing across the curriculum and reflective journaling have included math and science for some time and are also useful for writing development. When learners discuss their journal entries with other learners and edit and check each other’s written work, more opportunities come into play for oral academic language development as well.

Additionally, important concepts and content-rich vocabulary need to be learned in context through tasks that provide elaborated relevant examples and visual support (Nation, 2004). By highlighting and emphasizing new vocabulary, teachers can make new content comprehensible. Through the use of graphic organizers, students can understand text structure and organize important content-area knowledge for sharing with others and for further study (Echevarria, Short, & Powers, 2006).

**Reviewing, Consolidating, and Assessing Progress**

Effective integration of content and language instruction occurs when there is a focus on assessing student outcomes. Instructional practice includes the review and consolidation of what has been accomplished in a lesson by comparing planned outcomes with actual ones. Such an evaluation of progress is best accomplished through multiple pathways in which both informal and formal assessments are conducted (Gottlieb, 2006; Shohamy & Inbar, 2006; Valdez-Pierce, 2003) and in which both teachers and students take responsibility for the review and evaluation. States and local school districts administer formal, standards-based, summative assessments for accountability purposes and to track student progress. More frequent—and arguably more informative for instruction—is the formative assessment that takes place in the classroom on an ongoing basis. Formative assessments include review activities combined with portfolios of performance-based products (e.g., project work, writing samples, video clips of role plays and interviews, Web pages, multimedia presentations, surveys) and teacher-made tests, essay assignments, and quizzes. When student outcomes are assessed through performance-based tasks, there is opportunity for rich, in-depth evaluation of individual and interactive student learning.

In evaluating student work, teachers develop checklists and rubrics for assessment, sometimes in collaboration with students. Rubrics can be generic within a content area or across subjects, or they can be specific to a particular task. The same or similar rubrics may be used for both summative and formative assessment. In addition, when assessment of language and content is integrated into instruction on an ongoing basis through performance-based tasks, the spoken and written discourse produced by students is often aligned to the essential questions of a content area or to identified important themes. As a consequence, instruction is shaped by meaningful questions for student-generated inquiry, study, discussion, and presentation, and learning comes full circle. Introducing performance tasks with essential questions and rubrics makes desired learning and criteria for success transparent to the students (see Wiggins & McTighe, 2005).
The incorporation of review and evaluation within instruction can also focus on promoting students’ ongoing assessment of their own work. For example, there may be explicit instruction in learning strategies that encourages students to become aware of and monitor their own learning through activities such as predicting, visualizing, identifying main ideas, and raising critical questions about content (see Chamot & O'Malley, 1994). The goal of strategy instruction is to help students become self-regulated learners and to incorporate student self- and peer assessments into the learning process, along with teacher assessments of student language and content knowledge.

Conclusion

Integrated content and language instruction is a commitment to teach and assess the knowledge, skills, and language of a content area. The approach highlights the responsibility of all teachers within a school to intentionally support a dual focus on content and language because it is critical for the success of second language students. This digest has outlined four principles of instructional practice that foster integrated content and language instruction: (1) identification of content and language outcomes; (2) goal-directed interaction among learners, teachers, and others; (3) integration of reading, writing, listening, and speaking; and (4) ongoing review, consolidation, and assessment of outcomes.

References


7.2

Effective and Appropriate Feedback for English Learners

Bohdana Allman

Effective Feedback

We receive feedback all the time. For example, when we are asked to repeat what was said or when people laugh at our joke, we know what to do next. In a school setting, this type of informal feedback occurs all the time. Students learn and adjust their behavior based on their experiences and the way others react. However, it is also expected that we, as teachers, provide more explicit feedback as part of instruction to guide and advance our students' learning. As teachers, we recognize the importance and value of substantive feedback to both the students and the teachers. For students, feedback points out what they have done well and what they should keep doing, as well as what they should adjust and work on next. Including both positive and negative or corrective feedback can motivate students and promote a growth mindset, which enables them to see errors as opportunities to learn, grow, and improve. Feedback is also valuable for teachers. It gives them an opportunity to analyze student growth in terms of objectives they are trying to meet. It informs teachers about the strengths in the student's work and the areas where more work is needed. As we try to be unbiased in our assessment and fair in our judgments as culturally responsive teachers, feedback enables us to clearly signal what we value in our students' thinking, background, and work. It allows space to prompt our students' thinking. Ultimately, though, the real reason for effective feedback—the kind that is targeted, specific, and timely—is that it results in better learning for students. Improving student learning is our ultimate reason to implement effective feedback in the classroom.
Effective Feedback

Teaching less and providing more feedback that is targeted, specific, and timely is necessary in supporting students’ learning and brings about better results.

Targeted

Effective feedback is targeted, which means it is goal-referenced and consistent. Goal-referenced feedback is always tied to a previously established goal or a learning objective. It indicates to a learner whether they are on course or off track. Students are sometimes unsure about overall content, language, and literacy goals and even about specific task objectives. It is important to make goals and learning objectives clear at the onset of the activity and remind our students about them throughout the task to help them see a clear trajectory in mind. This enables students to self-assess if they are completing the task successfully and adjust as necessary. When they receive feedback tied to the goals and objectives, it will inform them of their progress and the need for adjustment. Consistent feedback means providing direction and feedback that is stable, accurate, and trustworthy. A well-designed rubric, rather than general comments like “B+” or “Super effort!” indicate that the teacher is focused on identified learning goals, has made evident what they are and how to get there. Using good rubrics as well as taking advantage of pre- and post-assessments to measure progress and evaluate specifically what each student needs to do to meet standards makes our feedback more goal-oriented and consistent, therefore, more targeted.

Specific

Effective feedback is specific, which means it is tangible and transparent, actionable, and user-friendly. Tangible and transparent feedback ensures that the direction students receive is substantial and concrete enough and that they understand what it means. Feedback also needs to be actionable, which means it leads to action. It must be descriptive enough that the student understands what they should do to correct the error and what they need to do differently in the future. Effective feedback is also specific in a way that it considers the recipient and as a result is user-friendly, which makes it more meaningful. User-friendly feedback is on the learner’s level. It does not include too much or too little information or information beyond or below their level of understanding. For example, if a teacher uses editing marks on a student’s paper, they need to make sure that their students understand what those editing marks mean, otherwise, such feedback is not user-friendly and therefore ineffective. In the classroom where peer feedback is used, it is useful to teach students basic principles of effective feedback and introduce related discourse so that they know how to speak to each other about and help each other effectively. Furthermore, using specific feedback allows teachers to use less-judgmental language. Explaining a specific observation of an error pattern and giving concrete suggestions that will move the student closer to the target, may make students more receptive to hearing it and acting upon it. Teachers should specifically point out what the student is doing right, clearly highlight what is amiss, as well as give concrete suggestions for improvement while restraining from judgment. Students are able to act when they are given specific feedback in terms of tangible and transparent, actionable, and user-friendly.
Specific feedback provides clear guidance on how to improve, invites action, is not overwhelming to students and they do not feel judged by it. It helps them identify specific ways to change, to listen with a learning orientation, and push themselves to improve.

**Timely**

Effective feedback is timely, meaning it is well-timed, prompt, and ongoing. Effective feedback must be given while the learning is still happening so that the students do not develop misconceptions and will remain invested in the subject matter. This requires a teacher’s expert judgment. Teachers must decide, based on the learning task and knowing the student, how much feedback to give and whether a learning situation calls for written comments, conversation, demonstration, peer responses, or another option. It is also important for teachers to recognize when to abstain from giving feedback in order to allow students time to practice, test hypotheses, self-correct or negotiate as they work in a group. Evaluating students’ work and providing feedback promptly presents a great challenge for many teachers. It is helpful to prioritize, pick the feedback focus, and recognize that 100% mastery may not be realistic for every assignment. However, there are other effective strategies to ease the overwhelming load of providing prompt feedback, such as using peer-feedback and self-evaluations, utilizing technology to automate feedback, and design more tangible feedback into the performance task itself. Additionally, utilizing feedback as a formative, ongoing, and frequent guidance rather than summative evaluation may allow more prompt turnaround and is ultimately more effective. Students might accept ongoing feedback more readily as it is less intimidating and they can use it quickly in a similar task and get new feedback on the improved performance. Providing many formative opportunities to adjust leads to desired performance and prepares students for success on summative assessments. In fact, the way we as teachers approach feedback does not only determine how our students interpret and respond to it but it also influences how they orient themselves toward learning. Providing ongoing low-threat objective feedback instead of non-specific numeric evaluations encourages students to view errors positively and develop a learning orientation, directed at improving their own competence, rather than a performance orientation, just caring about the outcomes and grades.

Teaching less and providing more feedback that is targeted, specific, and timely is necessary for supporting our students’ learning and brings about better results. Although effective feedback generally meets the needs of most students, it will not always meet the needs of English learners (ELs). In addition to errors in content mastery and literacy, English learners make errors related to language learning requiring slightly different kind of feedback. For example, if you are immediately jumping in and correcting an English learner’s grammar errors in class, you could argue that you were being targeted, specific, and timely and wonder why the errors keep occurring, or worse, not understand why that student no longer participates in class. The feedback that is appropriate for English learners requires special expertise.

**Appropriate Feedback**

The feedback that we provide to our English learners still needs to be targeted, specific, and timely, but in particular ways. Because of what we understand about the developmental nature and the role of errors in language learning, we recognize that feedback that is appropriate for English learners is also balanced, differentiated, and supportive. ELL appropriate feedback considers individual students’ needs based on where they are developmentally and is constructed in relation to the reading, writing, speaking, listening that they produce. Teachers need to look for patterns in the student’s work, see what the student knows and what kind of errors they make, and provide feedback related to the next step in their growth. Many pressures cause teachers to fall into the habit of giving the same instruction and then praising those who do well and dismiss those who fail. However, we need to recognize that tailoring instruction and related feedback for every student based on their needs is our moral obligation and it is, in fact, constitutionally...
mandated. When teachers provide feedback appropriate for English learners, they demonstrate their understanding that language students have unique learning requirements and need individualized support.

**Effective and Appropriate Feedback for English Learners**

In addition to errors in content mastery and literacy, English learners make errors related to language learning, requiring slightly different kinds of feedback. Feedback for English learners still needs to be targeted, specific, and timely, but with an approach that is balanced, differentiated, and supportive.

Balanced

As teachers of ELs, we must always consider how we could use our feedback to help our learners move forward in their language acquisition. Balanced feedback builds on targeted feedback in a way that we recognize that the goal is to consistently balance attention to form, meaning, and appropriateness. Although many teachers focus on the correct form, which is grammatical correctness, attention to meaning, and appropriateness are more meaningful for ELs and their development of communicative competence. When we consider that the primary purpose of language is to convey meaning, we will encourage our students to communicate the meaning as best as possible and use strategies to make themselves understood. Although using language correctly (focusing on form) helps English learners to communicate, the goal of many tasks is to communicate the intended information (focus on meaning). As teachers of ELLs, it is important that we balance our feedback by focusing on either meaning or form or both if appropriate and making sure that we make these goals clear from the beginning of an activity. When we help our students focus on meaning, we encourage them to use correct vocabulary terms. When we focus on form, we help them to use correct grammatical structures on word, sentence, and discourse levels. During the early stages of development, we can expect learners being able to use vocabulary items correctly within a specific context. We can also expect them to be able to correctly spell some words and use certain basic grammatical structures. Providing feedback on multiple and specialized meanings of words, their correct usage within a sentence, and expectation of grammatical correctness on a higher level is more realistic for advanced learners. Our feedback should match these expectations.

Providing balanced feedback also means attending to the sociocultural appropriateness of the learner’s language as it may have the biggest social impact on the learner. Often unrecognized in language instruction, the importance of appropriateness becomes obvious when we cringe as a non-native language speaker uses language that does not fit the purpose, audience or context, even if the language is grammatically correct. Appropriateness is referred to using language that is suitable for a particular purpose and a particular audience in a particular social context. These social conventions of language use greatly vary across languages and cultures. In fact, research suggests that when native speakers judged the severity of errors, errors in appropriateness are considered more serious than grammatical
errors. Interestingly enough, language learners may not even recognize that they are making errors in appropriateness because they may not yet be familiar with the usage conventions of the new language and culture. Helping students recognize these cross-linguistic differences in specific circumstances and coaching them in using appropriate language for certain audiences in a certain context is just as important as helping them communicate meaning and use correct form. Raising awareness and activities that encourage noticing, as well as providing feedback on appropriateness errors are all beneficial in helping language learners improve their overall communicative competence. It is important that we help our language learners develop communicative competence by providing balanced feedback that focuses on meaning, form, and appropriateness.

An example of negative vs. positive politeness:

An English speaker compliments on the performance of one's daughter ("Your daughter did a wonderful job during her recital"). In American culture, it would be appropriate to respond using positive politeness ("Yes, thank you! She is really talented."). On the other hand, a Japanese speaker's cultural norms would encourage them to use negative politeness in response to this compliment ("Oh, she was quite lucky that day.") Consider how these responses would be interpreted and misunderstood by an individual from the other culture who is not aware of the "appropriate" way of responding to compliments.

Differentiated

Differentiated feedback builds on specific feedback and is related to the term differentiated instruction. In the context of feedback, differentiated means we determine if the error is content-related or language-related so we can adjust the feedback accordingly. With language learners, errors occur on two levels – content and language. Students may understand the underlying concepts and ideas but might not use correct language to express it. When we identify that the error is language-related, our feedback would include both recognizing the correct conceptual understanding and identifying correct language form related to the concept. We can help the learner in multiple ways by modeling the correct language, helping the student practice proficiency-level appropriate language, bringing their attention to where the language appears in the text, and reminding them of or reteaching the grammatical rule. It is also possible that students demonstrate correct language, having "memorized" appropriate phrases and related language, appearing that they know the content but actually may not fully understand the concepts. We must always check that the understanding is there with the language. When we identify that the issue may be related to lack of content understanding, our feedback will look very different. We will need to make sure that we reteach or provide materials and support for the student to master the content together with related language.

Additionally, when we differentiate feedback, we need to make sure that there is not a mismatch in the feedback we are providing and the feedback the learner is receiving. For example, when a student says, "Sun set in the West" we could provide conversational feedback and respond, "Sun WHAT in the West?", thinking that we are helping them notice subject-verb agreement but we may mislead them into questioning their use of a correct word or their content understanding. We need to be specific and provide differentiated feedback by making clear that their understanding is correct and at the same time helping them adjust their language to represent the correct form. When we plan to provide specific feedback to our ELLs, we need to consider that the error could stem from multiple reasons. Providing differentiated feedback requires that we first differentiate whether the error is due to lack of content understanding or if it is a language issue and then provide clear feedback that matches the underlying cause.

Supportive

Along with balanced and differentiated feedback, language learners need feedback that is supportive. Supportive feedback relates to issues of timely feedback in a sense that it needs to be prompt, ongoing, consistent, and provided in the right time as judged by the teacher based on the character of the task and
student needs. Additionally, feedback that is supportive for English learners is provided in the right time considering unique needs of language learners and potentially dual nature of learning tasks to learn the content and acquire content-specific academic language as well as broader English proficiency. When the goal of the task is to communicate, we need to focus on providing feedback on the ability to communicate. When the goal of the task is to practice correct form based on the prior instruction, we should focus on correcting the grammatical form(s) that is being practiced. Correcting too many errors may frustrate the learner and halt their willingness to communicate and express their ideas. Recognizing patterns and developmental nature of errors helps us understand that in our feedback we should focus primarily on errors that our learners are ready to correct, not on errors that are beyond their developmental level.

Supportive feedback also enables the transfer of knowledge of language, content, skills, and strategies from the student’s native language to English. Such feedback honors and validates what they already know even when their linguistic skills are still limited. When we correct errors and provide feedback in a way that is positive, non-intrusive and avoids embarrassing the student, it is often received more readily. Although direct feedback is valuable based on the task and student needs, teachers need to also recognize the value of feedback that is more subtle, interactive and communicative in nature. Rather than directly correcting, the teacher may recast and model correct language usage as part of an authentic conversation potentially raising awareness of the correct language form in a natural way.

An example of supportive feedback through recasting:

   Student: Teacher, yesterday I goed to store with my mom.

   Teacher: You went to the store with your mom? I also went to the store with my daughter. What did you buy at the store?

When providing supportive feedback on student's writing, teachers should follow similar rules of considering the learner's needs and developmental level and attending to errors based on the task goals (i.e., focusing on conveying meaning vs. correct language form and differentiating between content and language errors). Providing supportive feedback on written work could also be direct and indirect. Although direct feedback and error correction may lead to a more accurate revision faster, providing less direct feedback that allows the student to self-correct may result in more enduring learning. This can be done by underlying the error and providing a clue but allowing the student to figure out the correct form on their own. However, a combination of direct and indirect feedback may be the best way to support our language learners, allowing them to figure out what they can on their own and moving them beyond by providing direct feedback or just-in-time instruction about language form that is slightly beyond their reach. Attending to the feedback that is balanced, differentiated, and supportive while keeping in mind characteristics of effective feedback as being targeted, specific, and timely enables us to attend to individual student needs and adjust our feedback to best support our English learners cognitive and linguistic development.

References


**Suggested Citation**


This Questions and Answers document outlines states’ responsibilities to infants, toddlers, and children with disabilities and their families, and to the staff serving these children. During an outbreak of COVID-19, local educational agencies (LEAs) and early intervention service (EIS) programs will need to collaborate with their state educational agency (SEA), Bureau of Indian Education (BIE), or local public health department, as appropriate, to address questions about how, what, and when services should be provided to children with disabilities. It does not create or confer any rights for or on any person. This Q & A document does not impose any additional requirements beyond those included in applicable law and regulations. The responses presented in this document generally constitute informal guidance representing the interpretation of the Department of the applicable statutory or regulatory requirements in the context of the specific facts presented here and are not legally binding. The Q & As in this document are not intended to be a replacement for careful study of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504), Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (Title II), and their implementing regulations. The IDEA, its implementing regulations, and other important documents related to the IDEA can be found at http://sites.ed.gov/idea. For more information on the requirements of Section 504 and Title II, and their implementing regulations, please consult https://www2.ed.gov/policy/rights/guid/ocr/disabilityoverview.html.

1 This document does not address when to dismiss a child or close a school or Part C state lead agency because school officials should work with their local health departments to make those decisions. School personnel and Part C EIS programs and providers, however, may consult the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC’s) guidance for recommendations regarding social distancing and school closure. The CDC’s Web site contains information addressing both state and local public health officials and school administrators for school (K-12) responses to COVID-19 and resources for child care and early childhood programs. These documents, along with other recommendations, may be accessed at https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/index.html.
A. Implementing Part B of the IDEA and Section 504 during a COVID-19 outbreak

Question A-1: Is an LEA required to continue to provide a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to students with disabilities during a school closure caused by a COVID-19 outbreak?

Answer: The IDEA, Section 504, and Title II of the ADA do not specifically address a situation in which elementary and secondary schools are closed for an extended period of time (generally more than 10 consecutive days) because of exceptional circumstances, such as an outbreak of a particular disease.

If an LEA closes its schools to slow or stop the spread of COVID-19, and does not provide any educational services to the general student population, then an LEA would not be required to provide services to students with disabilities during that same period of time. Once school resumes, the LEA must make every effort to provide special education and related services to the child in accordance with the child’s individualized education program (IEP) or, for students entitled to FAPE under Section 504, consistent with a plan developed to meet the requirements of Section 504. The Department understands there may be exceptional circumstances that could affect how a particular service is provided. In addition, an IEP Team and, as appropriate to an individual student with a disability, the personnel responsible for ensuring FAPE to a student for the purposes of Section 504, would be required to make an individualized determination as to whether compensatory services are needed under applicable standards and requirements.

If an LEA continues to provide educational opportunities to the general student population during a school closure, the school must ensure that students with disabilities also have equal access to the same opportunities, including the provision of FAPE. (34 CFR §§ 104.4, 104.33 (Section 504) and 28 CFR § 35.130 (Title II of the ADA)). SEAs, LEAs, and schools must ensure that, to the greatest extent possible, each student with a disability can be provided the special education and related services identified in the student’s IEP developed under IDEA, or a plan developed under Section 504. (34 CFR §§ 300.101 and 300.201 (IDEA), and 34 CFR § 104.33 (Section 504)).
**Question A-2:** Must an LEA provide special education and related services to a child with a disability who is absent for an extended period of time because the child is infected with COVID-19, while the schools remain open?

**Answer:** Yes. It has long been the Department’s position that when a child with a disability is classified as needing homebound instruction because of a medical problem, as ordered by a physician, and is home for an extended period of time (generally more than 10 consecutive school days), an individualized education program (IEP) meeting is necessary to change the child’s placement and the contents of the child’s IEP, if warranted. Further, if the IEP goals will remain the same and only the time in special education will change, then the IEP Team may add an amendment to the IEP stating specifically the amount of time to be spent in special education. If a child with a disability is absent for an extended period of time because of a COVID-19 infection and the school remains open, then the IEP Team must determine whether the child is available for instruction and could benefit from homebound services such as online or virtual instruction, instructional telephone calls, and other curriculum-based instructional activities, to the extent available. In so doing, school personnel should follow appropriate health guidelines to assess and address the risk of transmission in the provision of such services. The Department understands there may be exceptional circumstances that could affect how a particular service is provided.

If a child does not receive services after an extended period of time, a school must make an individualized determination whether and to what extent compensatory services may be needed, consistent with applicable requirements, including to make up for any skills that may have been lost.

**Question A-3:** What services must an LEA provide if a public school for children with disabilities is selectively closed due to the possibility of severe complications from a COVID-19 outbreak?

**Answer:** If a public school for children with disabilities is closed solely because the children are at high risk of severe illness and death, the LEA must determine whether each dismissed child could benefit from online or virtual instruction, instructional telephone calls, and other curriculum-based instructional activities, to the extent available. In so doing,
school personnel should follow appropriate health guidelines to assess and address the risk of transmission in the provision of such services. The Department understands there may be exceptional circumstances that could affect how a particular service is provided.

If a child does not receive services during a closure, a child's IEP team (or appropriate personnel under Section 504) must make an individualized determination whether and to what extent compensatory services may be needed, consistent with applicable requirements, including to make up for any skills that may have been lost.

Question A-4: If a child with a disability at high risk of severe medical complications is excluded from school during an outbreak of COVID-19 and the child's school remains open, is the exclusion considered a change in educational placement subject to the protections of 34 CFR §§ 300.115 and 300.116 and 34 CFR §§ 104.35 and 104.36.

Answer: If the exclusion is a temporary emergency measure (generally 10 consecutive school days or less), the provision of services such as online or virtual instruction, instructional telephone calls, and other curriculum-based instructional activities, to the extent available, is not considered a change in placement. During this time period, a child's parent or other IEP team member may request an IEP meeting to discuss the potential need for services if the exclusion is likely to be of long duration (generally more than 10 consecutive school days). For long-term exclusions, an LEA must consider placement decisions under the IDEA's procedural protections of 34 CFR §§ 300.115 – 300.116, regarding the continuum of alternative placements and the determination of placements.

Under 34 CFR § 300.116, a change in placement decision must be made by a group of persons, including the parents and other persons knowledgeable about the child and the placement options. If the placement group determines that the child meets established high-risk criteria and, due to safety and health concerns, the child’s needs could be met through homebound instruction, then under 34 CFR §300.503(a)(1), the public agency must issue a prior written notice proposing the change in placement. A parent who disagrees with this
prior written notice retains all of the due process rights included in 34 CFR §§ 300.500-300.520.

For children with disabilities protected by Section 504 who are dismissed from school during an outbreak of COVID-19 because they are at high risk for health complications, compliance with the procedures described above and completion of any necessary evaluations of the child satisfy the evaluation, placement and procedural requirements of 34 CFR §§ 104.35 and 104.36. The decision to dismiss a child based on his or her high risk for medical complications must be based on the individual needs of the child and not on perceptions of the child’s needs based merely on stereotypes or generalizations regarding his or her disability.

**Question A-5:** May an IEP Team consider a distance learning plan in a child’s IEP as a contingency plan in the event of a COVID-19 outbreak that requires the school’s closure?

**Answer:** Yes. IEP teams may, but are not required to, include distance learning plans in a child’s IEP that could be triggered and implemented during a selective closure due to a COVID-19 outbreak. Such contingent provisions may include the provision of special education and related services at an alternate location or the provision of online or virtual instruction, instructional telephone calls, and other curriculum-based instructional activities, and may identify which special education and related services, if any, could be provided at the child’s home.

Creating a contingency plan before a COVID-19 outbreak occurs gives the child’s service providers and the child’s parents an opportunity to reach agreement as to what circumstances would trigger the use of the child’s distance learning plan and the services that would be provided during the dismissal.

**Question A-6:** What activities other than special education and related services may and may not be provided with IDEA Part B funds both prior to and during a COVID-19 outbreak?

**Answer:** IDEA Part B funds may be used for activities that directly relate to providing, and ensuring the continuity of, special education and related services to children with disabilities. For example, an LEA may use
IDEA Part B funds to disseminate health and COVID-19 information that is specifically related to children with disabilities, to develop emergency plans for children with disabilities, or to provide other information (e.g., guidance on coordination of the provision of services in alternate locations as described in Question A-5) to parties who may need such information, including school staff responsible for implementing IEPs, parents of eligible children, and staff in alternate locations where special education and related services may be provided. LEAs, however, may not use IDEA Part B funds to develop or distribute general COVID-19 guidance or to carry out activities that are not specific to children with disabilities (e.g., general COVID-19 activities for all children and staff). Additionally, LEAs may not use IDEA Part B funds to administer future COVID-19 vaccinations to any children, including children with disabilities.
B. IDEA Part C and COVID-19

Question B-1: Must a state lead agency continue to provide early intervention services to infants and toddlers with disabilities during a COVID-19 outbreak if the offices are closed?

Answer: If the offices of the state lead agency or the EIS program or provider are closed, then Part C services would not need to be provided to infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families during that period of time. If the lead agency’s offices are open but the offices of the EIS program or provider in a specific geographical area are closed due to public health and safety concerns as a result of a COVID-19 outbreak in that area, the EIS program or provider would not be required to provide services during the closure. If the offices remain open, but Part C services cannot be provided in a particular location (such as in the child’s home), by a particular EIS provider, or to a particular child who is infected with COVID-19, then the lead agency must ensure the continuity of services by, for example, providing services in an alternate location, by using a different EIS provider, or through alternate means, such as consultative services to the parent.

Additionally, once the offices re-open, the service coordinator and EIS providers for each child must determine if the child’s service needs have changed and determine whether the individualized family service plan (IFSP) team needs to meet to review the child’s IFSP to determine whether any changes are needed. If offices are closed for an extended period and services are not provided for an extended period, the IFSP team must meet under 34 CFR § 303.342(b)(1) to determine if changes are needed to the IFSP and to determine whether compensatory services are needed to address the infant or toddler’s developmental delay.

Question B-2: What should a state lead agency or EIS program provider do to provide Part C services if its offices are open, but it cannot provide services in accordance with an infant’s or toddler’s IFSP during a COVID-19 outbreak?

Answer: If the offices remain open, but Part C services cannot be provided in a particular location (such as in the child’s home), by a particular EIS provider, or to a particular child who is infected with COVID-19, then
the lead agency must ensure the continuity of services, on a case-by-case basis and consistent with protecting the health and safety of the student and those providing services to the student. As an example, the lead agency may consider providing services in an alternate location, by using a different EIS provider, or through alternate means, such as consultative service to the parent. Once services are fully resumed, the service coordinator and EIS providers for each child must assess the child to determine if the child’s service needs have changed and to determine whether the IFSP Team needs to meet to review the child’s IFSP to identify whether changes to the IFSP are needed. If the offices are closed and services are not provided for an extended period, the IFSP Team must meet under 34 CFR § 303.342(b)(1) to determine if changes are needed to the IFSP and to determine whether compensatory services are needed.

If an EIS provider cannot provide Part C services in the child’s home during a COVID-19 outbreak, but the EIS program or provider determines that it is safe to provide face-to-face Part C services in another environment such as a hospital or medical clinic, then the child could receive temporary services at the hospital or clinic. Additionally, if the lead agency or EIS provider determines that face-to-face Part C services should not be provided for a period of time, then the EIS provider or service coordinator may consult with the parent through a teleconference or other alternative method (such as e-mail or video conference), consistent with privacy interests, to provide consultative services, guidance, and advice as needed. However, determining how to provide Part C services in a manner that is consistent with the most updated public health and safety guidance is left to the discretion of the lead agency and the EIS program and provider serving a particular child and family.

**Question B-3:** What activities other than service provision may and may not be provided with IDEA Part C funds both prior to and during a potential COVID-19 outbreak?

**Answer:** IDEA Part C funds may be used for activities that directly relate to providing, and ensuring the continuity of, Part C services to eligible children and their families. The state may use IDEA Part C funds to disseminate health and COVID-19 information to relevant parties, develop emergency plans to support the provision and continuity of
Part C services, or provide other information (e.g., how the lead agency staff or EIS programs or providers may provide alternate services or services in alternate locations as described in Question B-2) to relevant parties who need this information. Relevant parties may include parents of eligible children, childcare centers, staff in other locations where early intervention services are provided, EIS programs and providers, and primary referral sources. Other activities that relate to service provision, including the provision of service coordination, evaluations, and assessments, may also be funded. The state may not, however, use IDEA Part C funds to administer future COVID-19 vaccinations as it is a medical service under 34 CFR §303.13(c)(3).
Providing Continuity of Learning
to Students with Disabilities during COVID-19

Purpose

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), Division of Early Intervention and Special Education Services (DEI/SES) has created this Technical Assistance Bulletin (TAB: # 20-03) to guide the provision of special education and related services to students with disabilities during the extended school closure due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The MSDE, DEI/SES recognizes that Local School Systems (LSSs) and Public Agencies (PAs) have rapidly shifted operations and service delivery from face-to-face instruction to virtual and/or distance learning while students are at home. The MSDE, DEI/SES remains committed to supporting LSSs/PAs as they navigate these rapidly evolving times. This guidance remains in effect until further notice. This TAB guides the development of changes to the Individualized Education Program (IEP) (if needed), remote implementation of the IEP, and evaluation of each student’s progress within the virtual and/or distance learning environment. This TAB includes:

- Legal Drivers: The Provision of FAPE/IDEA
  - Continuity of Learning Provisions during Extended School Closure
  - Transitioning to Remote Learning: A Recursive Approach
- Process of Individualizing Continuity of Learning during Extended School Closure
- Development of an IEP during Extended School Closure
  - No Changes Needed to Current IEP (as Written)
  - Changes Needed to Current IEP (Amend or Revise)
- Implementation of the IEP through Virtual and/or Distance Learning Environment
  - Remote Learning Methods
- Evaluation of the IEP to Inform Future Actions
- Frequently Asked Questions
- Resources

This document is a supplement to TAB: # 20-01 Serving Children with Disabilities under IDEA During School Closures Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, which is a guiding document that outlines the provision of a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) for students with disabilities and the compliance requirements related to the Individualized Education Program (IEP).
Legal Drivers: The Provision of FAPE/IDEA

While the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in the closing of school buildings, the right to a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE), and the obligation of the LSS/PA to provide FAPE to all students, including students with disabilities, remains unchanged. FAPE must be provided in alignment with the IEP of the student (20 U.S.C.A. § 1401(9)(D)). The IEP must be “reasonably calculated to enable the student to make progress appropriate in light of the student’s circumstances” (See Endrew F. ex rel. Joseph F. v. Douglas County Sch. Dist. RE-1, 137 S. Ct. 988, 999 (2017)). Therefore, as LSSs/PAs provide special education and related services through virtual and/or distance learning methods to the general student population, each LSS/PA must also ensure that a student with a disability is provided FAPE consistent with their IEP; this is the provision of special education and related services through the delivery of specially designed instruction (SDI), to the greatest extent possible. The Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act (IDEA) defines SDI as adapting the content, methodology, or delivery of instruction to address the student’s unique needs that result from the student’s disability and ensure access to the general education curriculum so that the student can meet the educational standards that apply to all students (34 CFR § 300.39).

While there is no flexibility in the obligation to provide FAPE, at this time, LSSs/PAs do have flexibility in the methods employed to implement the IEP. Given the health and safety concerns present in the current pandemic, the way some services are provided may need to be delivered remotely, telephonically, or by other distance learning methods.

Continuity of Learning Provisions during Extended School Closure

Under the direction of Maryland’s State Superintendent of Schools, each LSS/PA is required to develop a system-wide Continuity of Learning Plan to address the continued education of students during this period of extended school closure. Each plan must include:

- an overall description of how the school system will deliver continuity of learning;
- the distance learning platform;
- available technology;
- how the system will provide instruction to students without access to technology or the internet;
- descriptions of the roles of administrators, teachers, staff, students, and parents;
- plans of accountability on monitoring and grading students;
- plans to meet the needs of students with special education needs;
- a sample teacher and student day;
- an Equity Plan, including special education, English language learners, academic needs, homeless students, and gifted students;
- professional development plans for staff; and
- resources for students, parents, staff.

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1 As of publication of this bulletin, all legal obligations under IDEA remain in place. Waiver of IDEA obligations can only be enacted by an act of Congress.

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As indicated, each LSS/PA is required to plan and address the needs of students requiring special education needs. The MSDE, DEI/SES, has created a flowchart (Figure 1) to guide LSS/PA's in planning and providing special education services, to the greatest extent possible, during this unprecedented time.

**Figure 1**. Continuity of Learning Provisions for Students with Disabilities during Extended School Closures due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. (See Appendix A). Click here for a downloadable Word document that will allow for increased readability of the flowchart using the zoom function.

The Continuity of Learning Provisions for Students with Disabilities during Extended School Closure due to the COVID-19 Pandemic flowchart is designed to support LSSs/PA’s decision-making for individual students receiving special education delivered in a virtual and/or distance learning environment as a part of their local Continuity of Learning Plan. To support individualized continuity of learning for students with disabilities, schools have three options for documenting the services to be provided during the extended school closure:

1. implement the IEP as written through virtual instruction,
2. amend the IEP with parent agreement (outside of the IEP Team meeting) to supplement student’s current IEP, or
3. revise the IEP if the parent is not in agreement to the amended IEP (through the IEP Team meeting process).

Remember, as LSSs/PA’s make individual determinations for each student with disabilities receiving special education services through an IEP, they must provide a FAPE consistent with the need to protect the health and safety of students with disabilities and those individuals providing education, specialized instruction, and related services to these students. Exceptional circumstances may affect how all educational and related services are provided. Schools may not be able to provide all services in the same manner they are typically provided (US Department of Education, March 21, 2020).
As each LSS/PA implement their local *Continuity of Learning Plan*, school staff collaborate with the family to determine how the general education instruction offered to all students can be adapted for the student with an IEP, and how special education and related services can be provided consistent with each student’s IEP. This requires reviewing the components of the student’s current IEP to identify the services that can be delivered in the virtual and/or distance learning environment and redesigning services, modifications and/or accommodations, as needed, to continue providing FAPE to the student with a disability. Through this collaborative process, educators identify/develop strategies to provide instruction so that the student can make progress on their IEP goals and the general education curriculum grade-level standards and to prevent regression in learning, to the greatest extent possible, during this unprecedented time.

If school staff believe that the IEP needs to be temporarily amended, and the parent agrees, the amendment(s) will be documented and sent to the family and all service providers. If the parent does not agree with the proposed amendments, then the IEP team meets remotely to revise the IEP. If the parent cannot participate in this IEP meeting, then the IEP team must implement those services currently on the IEP that can be reasonably provided virtually, in a manner that does not change the student’s program or placement. Once regular school operations resume, the IEP team will determine whether and to what extent a student has made progress and has gained or lost skills during the extended school closure to design their next steps. Transitioning from a face-to-face instructional model in school to a virtual and/or distance learning model in the home involves a recursive cycle of development, implementation, and evaluation.

**Transitioning to Remote Learning: A Recursive Approach**

To operationalize the transition, Figure 2 highlights the components of the IEP considered within the context of the virtual and/or distance learning environment. The process of development, implementation, and evaluation is cyclical. Once the plan is developed, it is implemented; data is collected to evaluate and inform educators, related service providers, and parents, and the team uses information about the effectiveness of the IEP to make revisions and develop new goals or revised services. Using the new data obtained in the virtual and/or distance learning environment, the team will revisit the IEP and begin the cycle again.

*Figure 2. The recursive cycle of development, implementation, and evaluation of a student’s Individualized Education Program (IEP).*

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Development of an IEP during Extended School Closure

Special education and related service providers, in collaboration with parent(s), review the components of the approved IEP to identify the services that can be delivered in the virtual or distance learning environment and redesign the goals and/or services, as needed, to continue providing FAPE to the student with a disability.

No Changes Needed to Current IEP (as Written)

After careful consideration of the student’s IEP within the context of a virtual and/or distance learning environment, the LSS/PA determines if any changes are necessary to the IEP. Some students’ IEPs will be able to be implemented as written, as changing the delivery mode from face-to-face instruction to virtual instruction does not necessarily require a change to the IEP. For example, some students with disabilities may be able to access their class program as the special educator adapts materials that may be posted online for student work or online peer collaboration on assignments. The accommodations on the IEP, such as extended time or frequent breaks, may be easily implemented at home, while related services may be provided through video conferencing or telephonically. For these students, the LSS/PA continues to implement their IEP as written.²

Changes Needed to Current IEP (Amend or Revise)

For many students, the extended school closure and shift to remote learning will necessitate a change to the IEP. This may be due to constraints of the home, the content of instruction available, the method of providing instruction, or the ability to deliver specially designed instruction (SDI) remotely. For example, some students may require in-person tutorials online rather than participation in large or small group online instruction to access the curriculum. Some goals or objectives may not be possible to address in the home. Some goals may require physical supports or peer engagement that cannot be facilitated. If these or other limitations to IEP implementation are found, the team may recommend changes to the IEP.

Changes to the IEP may be documented in one of two ways:

- **Parent agreement to the amendment of the IEP.** School staff can propose changes to the IEP outside of the formal IEP team process. If the parent agrees, this will be documented as an IEP amendment. The IEP amendment must be provided to the parent and staff responsible for implementing the plan and uploaded to the Maryland Online IEP or LSS IEP platform.

- **Revision of the IEP through an IEP Team meeting.** The IEP may be revised during an IEP team meeting. If the parent does not agree to an amendment of the IEP, then the LSS or PA will need to hold an IEP meeting to discuss necessary changes. The revised IEP can only be implemented after the parent has received prior written notice (PWN).³

² Even if a student’s IEP can be implemented as written, the LSS or PA should continue to communicate with the parent to ensure there are no new or different needs arising from the change in educational environment that could necessitate a change.

³ Each time the school proposes changes to the IEP, parents must receive prior written notice that includes a description of the action proposed, an explanation of why the school proposes the action, a description of the basis for the decision, a description of how parents may obtain independent educational evaluation, an explanation of the right of the parents to a due process hearing, and an explanation of the right of the parents to a free appropriate public education (FAPE).
If the parent is unable to participate in the IEP Team meeting, then no meeting shall be held; and only those services currently on the IEP that can be reasonably provided virtually, in a manner that does not change the program or placement, may be provided.

Some questions that the school staff (e.g., teacher or other service providers) can ask in conversation with the family to guide the decision about amendments to the IEP include.

**Learning Environment and Schedule**
- What is the student’s daily schedule at home?
- How will the general education and special education classes be conducted?
- Can the student participate in the online or virtual education classes offered by their general and special education teachers?
- Does the general/special education teacher(s) and/or service provider(s) have online office hours assigned for students?
- Can the student with an IEP access the general education class, teacher office hours, or other platforms used by the general education teacher?
- If whole group and small group instruction are offered through the general education Continuity of Learning Plan, will the student with an IEP be able to participate in those grouping arrangements as specified on the IEP?
- Will the student need additional 1:1, specially designed instruction to make progress on the IEP goals and grade-level curriculum?
- How long and how often is instruction needed for the student to continue to make progress on IEP goals and the general education curriculum?
- How much time does the student need for learning and practicing new skills?
- How long can the student sustain attention in the new learning platform?

**IEP Goals and Objectives**
- How can the student’s goals and objectives be implemented through the virtual and/or distance learning method?
- Identify the student’s goals and objectives that cannot be implemented through the virtual and/or distance learning method? Document why.
- Who will be responsible for implementation (special educator, related service provider, a general educator, paraeducator under the supervision of a special educator)?
- How can related service providers address goals related to their area of expertise?
- How can goals and objectives be monitored, and implementation documented?
- Can the evidence-based practices designed for delivery within the school setting be implemented within the new learning platform or another distance communication method?
- Are additional modifications to the general education instruction within the virtual learning environment needed in order to implement specially designed instruction?
- If the student requires alternate activities or additional resources (i.e., preloading information or re-teaching concepts), how will these be delivered?
● How will data be collected on the student’s response to learning activities and progress on IEP goals?

**Accommodations, Supplementary Aids and Services, and Program Modifications**

● Can accommodations, supplementary aids, and program modifications be implemented as written, or are changes necessary?

● How does the change from making accommodations for learning activities and assignments in the school setting impact implementation for distance learning assignments?

● Can the student’s service providers deliver supplementary aid and services and program modifications so the student can participate in the general education classes and assignments with peers without disabilities?

● Are new accommodations, supplementary aids and services, and/or program modifications needed?

● How will Assistive Technology (AT) be used to facilitate continued progress at home, as appropriate?

**Inclusive Training and Support for Personnel**

● Does the family need information, support, or training to assist their child in learning at home?

● Does the family need information, support, or training to support their child’s social-emotional well-being?

● Does the family need information, support, or training to implement behavioral interventions or functional skill development at home?

● Are additional specialists (e.g., psychologist, AT specialist) needed to assist the family with collaborating to implement the IEP at home?

● Do any of the service providers need additional training or support to deliver specially designed instruction to the student in the home setting?

● Can the training and support for the family or service providers currently written in the IEP be continued or offered through distant communication methods?
Service Provider Collaboration

• How will the special education and related service providers collaborate with each other and with the student’s general education teacher(s)?
• When will the service provider team meet?
• How are roles and responsibilities defined for planning and delivering specially designed instruction (SDI) and for evaluating progress and response to SDI?
• If a paraeducator is assigned to support the student, how will the service provider(s) develop plans for the paraeducator’s assistance? Can the paraeducator modify materials under the special educator’s direction? Is the paraeducator available to interact with the student in a manner aligned with the student’s schedule and communication method? Are there other assignments that the paraeducator can perform to support the team in implementing SDI?
• How will special and general educators collaborate to develop lessons, activities, and assignments that are accessible and individualized for each student based on the supports outlined in the IEP?
• How will the family be involved, and what level of communication works for the family considering their unique circumstances?

Implementation of the IEP through Virtual and/or Distance Learning Environment

Once the student’s special education program has been finalized and documented (e.g., the IEP implemented as is, amended, or revised), the student’s teachers and other service providers will begin the process of collaborating with each other and the family for implementation of specially designed instruction (SDI). Given the uniqueness of the current situation where students will be learning remotely, with family support and limited contact with classmates, teachers, and related service providers consider creative strategies to support the teaching and learning process.

Remote Learning Methods

The following list includes a range of no-tech, low-tech, and high-tech tools and modalities to facilitate SDI with implementation considerations for each. This list only provides examples, and the MSDE, DEI/SES, recognizes that a combination of these and other methods MAY be used to meet the individual learning needs of all students.

Printed Materials

• The team may post copies of documents on the commonly used remote learning site used by the LSS/PA (e.g., Schoology). They may also send home hard copy materials for students who cannot access the documents visually through various storage options (e.g., Google platform, MS Office, or Schoology).
• For students who cannot access printed materials in either hard copy or online, alternative ways to deliver the content may be developed, such as speech-to-text.
• Paraeducationalists may be given explicit direction on how to modify printed materials to make them accessible for a student, considering the unique impact of that student’s disability.
• Color code virtual folders for “to do,” “in process,” and “completed” tasks.
• Design a schedule to be sent by mail or email to the family to help them with home tasks as
well as school tasks and routines.

- Develop a behavioral regulation and feedback system that includes online reminders and affirmations of accomplishments.

**Recorded Lessons**

- Teachers may record lessons for students to access so that SDI is provided on IEP goals with directions for activities that may support learning, practice, or natural applications of an academic or functional skill.
- If teachers assign particular recordings such as webinars, podcasts, and read-alouds created and made available by subscriptions or to the general public, they will need to pay attention to accessibility, especially for students who may have significant cognitive disabilities, are blind or have low vision, are deaf/hard of hearing, or have significant reading needs.
- Record a verbal response to a question on an assignment or on an assessment that would ordinarily require a written response.
- Annotate tutorials, directions, or steps to complete tasks.

**Teacher Check-ins/Tutorials**

- Conferences, video, and traditional telephone calls may be used for teachers to explain directions, teach lessons, or provide individualized supports to students as determined by their IEP.
- Teachers can email accessible materials to families and students and share strategies and resources.
- Many teachers are offering “office hours” for students to access their teacher for additional assistance or to answer questions related to assignments.

**Evaluation of the IEP to Inform Future Actions**

As is the case during normal school operations, the collection of data on student progress is essential to evaluate the needs of the student and the appropriateness of the IEP. During this period of remote learning, data is critical for determining any potential new needs of the student stemming from the change in the instructional delivery method as well as for analyzing the impact on the student’s progress in the general education curriculum. As a reminder, once regular school operations resume, the IEP team will need to determine whether and to what extent a student has experienced regression and/or failed to make progress necessitating mitigation and recovery efforts (i.e., additional/new/different services and/or accommodations).

School staff should plan how data on student performance will be collected, and progress monitored frequently. On a regular basis, the IEP case manager, or other designated staff member, will review the data provided by the service providers. This data review should include updates on how well the service providers are able to actually implement SDI, and whether there are ongoing limitations to providing special education and related services to the student.

Educators should also consider ways to partner with the parent(s) to monitor the student’s response to the new learning context to evaluate the efficacy of providing remote services, accommodations,

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4 All materials must be provided to families at no cost as a part of FAPE.
and/or modifications for the student. The instructional team may also consider a review of a service delivery log as a basis from which to make this determination. An example of a service delivery log is below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Name: Juan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/15/20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When reviewing the student’s performance and progress, the team will want to add some considerations to the discussion of goal attainment and grade-level performance. These include:

- How was the student’s attendance and engagement in general education and special education lessons affected by extended school closure?
- Were there environmental factors that influence learning during instruction because of needing to learn at home?
- Were there sensory or other factors that influenced the student’s ability to participate in remote learning?
- To what extent was the student able to engage in and complete learning activities and assignments?
- Are there any new behaviors that may interfere with learning?
- Were there any unanticipated barriers that became apparent during the time that schools were closed?

Some questions that the teacher or other service providers might ask to evaluate the IEP are provided below.

- How is progress toward general education standards being measured for all students during this time? What assignments are being collected and/or graded? Are grades or credits being earned?
- What progress monitoring system is in place for IEP goals and objectives, and how is progress routinely analyzed?
- What system is in place to document the nature and amount of services (including consultation with families/caregivers, etc.) being delivered to the student?
• How often are progress and student response reviewed and documented to inform instruction so the team can address barriers in a timely manner?
• How are families engaged in the process?
• Have barriers become evident that may need to be addressed? (Barriers may include difficulty engaging families, student attendance, increase in off-task behaviors, etc.)
• If new behaviors are interfering with student progress, how can these be addressed?
• How is data being stored, and who is the primary individual responsible?

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: How can school staff anticipate the needs of the student in the home setting if it is difficult to obtain information from the parent(s)?

A: It may be necessary to rely on previously collected data that will help clarify the impact of the disability in the virtual and/or distance learning situation to support the identification of the learning needs of the student. This may include recently completed assessments such as home rating scales and supplemental information located in functional behavior assessments. It is important to document attempts and conversations with the parent(s).

Q: What IEP goals and objectives are addressed during the extended school closure?

A: The IEP goals reflect those skills that the IEP team determined the student needs to master to access and make progress in the general education curriculum (i.e., FAPE). During the extended school closure, the IEP goals and objectives should be implemented to the greatest extent possible. Factors in the virtual and/or distance learning environment may impact skills differently.

Q: How can SDI be implemented for students whose families have limited or no access to technology and/or those significantly impacted by environmental factors (i.e., job loss, homelessness)?

A: It is important in these instances to rely on the collaborative structure of the school system and include relevant parties who would support the student during traditional times (i.e., a school counselor, Pupil Personnel Worker (PPW), school psychologist, or school social worker). When these unique situations arise, the following questions can support a solution finding approach to the situation. It is critical that heightened attention to the safety and health of students, family, and staff be considered for all circumstances.
1. When the situation occurred while schools were in normal operations, how was the situation managed? What resources support the solution? What specialists within the system have responsibility for the concern or can provide a guiding direction?
2. How does the State of Emergency Response to COVID-19 and the Governor’s stay-at-home order impact or alter how the situation is addressed at this time?
3. Is the situation specific to special education services, or is it better managed by other system resources? What is the process to notify supportive resources (i.e., PPWs, counselors, school administrators)?
4. How does the situation impact the delivery of special education and related services through
Q: What if the parent(s) of a student is refusing special education and related services?

A: In this instance, it is critical to document conversations and attempts to engage with the student and parent. Consider scheduled and regular contact with the parent as a best practice. For example, a parent may indicate that the student will not respond to virtual and/or distance learning. In this instance, it is important to ask guiding questions to understand the perceived challenges and attempt to troubleshoot a possible solution. If the parent refuses services, it is equally important to regularly check back with the parent to determine if their situation has changed, impacting their willingness/ability to have their child participate in IEP services. It is recommended to share with parents how they can access the necessary school personnel if they wish to engage with services during the extended school closure or if they wish to ask questions about what their child’s services may look like. While flexibility is offered, documentation to support decisions is important to record efforts to support the provision of services.

Q: What does direct instruction mean in the use of a distance learning model during COVID-19 school closure?

A: Instruction may be provided by special education staff, including related service providers. Districts will need to assess translation and interpreting needs for students and families when developing and providing instructional materials. This can occur through a variety of means consistent with the distance learning section of this document. This includes:

- Paper packets and worksheets, which could be distributed daily by bus route or collected several times a week at a central location
- Textbooks
- Telephone instruction
- Online resources (consider the availability of broadband access)
- Instruction via the school’s learning management system (LMS)

Q: How are special educators expected to provide co-teaching and direct instruction to students with disabilities?

A: A best practice is for the collaborative planning structures that existed prior to the school closure remain intact during this time. The shift in roles and responsibilities of staff may be necessary to account for the varied and individualized needs of students during this time, but defining times and outcomes of planning sessions, as well as the roles and responsibilities of general and special educators in applying modifications, accommodations and leading instruction, will support an equitable approach to planning for and delivering instruction. For example, a general and special educator may collaboratively plan a week’s work of math lessons. For each of these, the special educator pre-loads individual accommodations onto the student’s virtual worksheets. During instruction, the general educator leads the lesson and checks in for understanding as the students complete the accommodated assignments.
Q: What if a student is not responding to the virtual and/or distance learning instruction method(s) being used?

A: When challenges arise, and there are concerns that learning or access to instruction is not occurring as expected, the IEP may require amendments. A discussion with key members of the instructional team and the parent(s) may identify barriers or challenges that may not have been considered or other factors that impact learning or access to instruction. Changes to the plan and parent agreement to the new changes using the established process for the system are documented. It is important to rely on the recursive cycle of SDI development, implementation, and evaluation to continually address student needs.

Q: How are assignments graded for students with disabilities?

A: Grading for students with disabilities will follow local school system/public agency policies and procedures for grading all students. If, during traditional instruction, the student received modified assignments or modified grading, the instructional team determines how this will be implemented in the context of virtual and/or distance learning assignments. If this flexibility exists on the current IEP, it is a best practice to document as such and discuss during the review process so there is a clear understanding of how the student will be graded and on what types of assignments. If necessary, amendments to the IEP are documented.
**Resources**

**NCSI Resource Library**
A number of resources vetted and made available through the National Center for Systemic Improvement (NCSI). Resources include evidence-based practices and guidance around stakeholder engagement, implementation strategies, and data collection and analysis.

**CASE Landing Page**
Council of Administrators of Special Education (CASE) COVID-19 guidance, including webinars, templates, and learning resources to support special education leadership in the development, implementation, and evaluation of virtual and/or distance learning for students with disabilities.

**Specially Designed Instruction**

**+225 Amazing Online Learning Resources**
A wide range of online learning resources within different core content areas supporting grades K-12. Most are free during COVID-19 to support online learning through June.

**CEC Teaching Special Education Online**
Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) provides strategies and resources for moving toward teaching SWD online.

**Audible audio stories**
Free audio stories for all children.

**Behavior and Social-Emotional Learning (SEL)**

**So Now What? Supporting SEL at Home**
The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) produced a video that offers suggestions and strategies to support SEL within the home while working with families and students during COVID-19.

**How to Teach SEL When Students are not in School**
EducWeek suggests strategies to support SEL for students.

**Activities to Teach Impulse Control**
A variety of games and activities that support students with increased impulse control that can be implemented in the home setting and via virtual learning.

**Parents Help to Encourage Social Success at Home Too!**
Activities to share with parents to support SEL at home.

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5 Resources are not endorsed by the DEI/SES, and information contained therein should not be construed to be the position of the DEI/SES.
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**Communication**

**AAC in Telepractice**
Recorded webinar describing strategies for supporting students who use AAC through distance methods, including strategies for parent collaboration and coaching and service documentation.

**Accessibility**

**Supporting Students with IEPs during E-Learning**
This webinar serves as an introduction to resources from SETDA (State Education Technology Directors Association) and the AEM Center (federally funded Accessible Educational Materials Center at CAST). It also provides an overview of accessibility issues in distance learning.

**Resources for Access and Distance Education** from the AEM Center
Recorded webinars, tip sheets, and other tools to support the selection and development of learning materials that are usable by students with a wide variety of disabilities.

**WebAIM**
Includes webinars and other resources for creating accessible e-learning activities.

**Explore Access: Tools for Promoting Disability Access and Inclusion**
Basic directions and links to additional information on creating online learning activities (e.g., creating accessible documents, adding captions to videos, etc.)

**Open Dyslexic**
Open software to download a font that is accessible to students with dyslexia.

**Remember Accessibility in the Rush to On-Line Learning**
The National Deaf Center provides tips on accessibility in online learning environments. Although designed primarily for post-secondary instructors and institutions, the tips are relevant for K-12 contexts as well.

**Screen Readers**

**NVDA**
A free screen reader that can be downloaded on any computer.

**JAWS**
The most commonly used screen reader is offering free home downloads until June 30, 2020.

**Windows Narrator**
Microsoft has a built-in screen reader available for free on all Windows platforms.

**Natural Reader**
This Google Chrome extension is a text-to-speech reader that will read text aloud within Chrome.
Click here for a downloadable Word document that will allow for increased readability of the flowchart using the zoom function.
## Virtual Assessments

### Woodcock-Johnson IV Tests of Achievement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Administer Virtually?</th>
<th>Alternate Assessment?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Letter-Word Identification</strong></td>
<td>Measures the student’s word identification skill. The initial items require the student to identify letters that appear in large type. The remaining items require the student to pronounce words correctly. The student is not required to know the meaning of any word.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>San Diego Quick Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Applied Problems</strong></td>
<td>Requires the student to analyze and solve math problems. The student must listen to the problem, recognize the procedure to be followed and then perform relatively simple calculations.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Quarterly math benchmark assessment data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Spelling</strong></td>
<td>Measures the ability to write orally presented words correctly.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Words Their Way Spelling Inventory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Passage Comprehension</strong></td>
<td>Measures the student’s ability to use syntactic and semantic cues to identify a missing word in test. The student must match a pictographic representation of a word with an actual picture of the object, match a picture to a phrase or read a short passage and identify a missing key word.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>QRI Reading Passages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Calculation</strong></td>
<td>Measures the ability to perform mathematical computations. Items range from writing individual numbers through calculus operations. Calculations are presented in traditional problem format and the student is not required to make any decisions about what operation to use or what data to include.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Early Numeracy Screener</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Writing Samples</strong></td>
<td>Measures skill in writing responses to a variety of demands. Responses are evaluated with respect to the quality of expression. The student must write sentences that are evaluated for their quality of expression. Errors in spelling, grammar and punctuation are not penalized.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Quarterly ELA literary performance task data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Word Attack</strong></td>
<td>Measures skill in applying phonic and structural analysis skills to the pronunciation of unfamiliar printed words. The student is asked to produce the sounds for single letters or read aloud letter</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Nonsense Word Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Impacts on Broad and Cluster Scores</td>
<td>Assessment Availability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combinations</td>
<td>combinations that are phonically consistent or regular patterns in English but are non-words or low frequency words.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oral Reading</td>
<td>Measures story reading accuracy and prosody. Performance is scored for both accuracy and fluency of expression.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Grade level fluency assessment (on PARCC Live Binder)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sentence Reading Fluency</td>
<td>Measures reading rate. Student must read simple sentences silently and quickly, decide if the statement is true or false, and then circle Yes or No in the Response Booklet. This test has a 3-minute time limit.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Grade level fluency assessment (on PARCC Live Binder)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math Facts Fluency</td>
<td>Measures the speed of computation or the ability to solve simple addition, subtraction and multiplication facts quickly. The student attempts to complete as many items as possible within a 3-minute time limit.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Grade level facts fluency assessments (on PARCC Live Binder)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sentence Writing Fluency</td>
<td>Measures an individual’s skill in formulating and writing simple sentences quickly. Each sentence must relate to a given stimulus picture and must include a given set of three words. This test has a 5-minute time limit.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Recall</td>
<td>Measures reading comprehension and meaningful memory. The individual reads a short story silently and then retells as much of the story as he or she can recall.</td>
<td>Doesn’t impact broad or cluster scores. May not be essential for virtual assessments.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number Matrices</td>
<td>Measures quantitative reasoning. A matrix is presented and the individual must identify the missing number.</td>
<td>Doesn’t impact broad or cluster scores. May not be essential for virtual assessments.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Editing</td>
<td>Measures skill in identifying and correcting errors in written passage. The error in the passage may be incorrect punctuation or capitalization, inappropriate word usage or a misspelling.</td>
<td>Doesn’t impact broad or cluster scores. May not be essential for virtual assessments.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word Reading Fluency</td>
<td>Measures vocabulary knowledge and semantic fluency. The individual has 3 minutes to mark the two words that go together in each row.</td>
<td>Doesn’t impact broad or cluster scores. May not be essential for virtual assessments.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spelling of Sounds</td>
<td>Measures spelling ability, particularly phonological and orthographical coding skills.</td>
<td>Doesn’t impact broad or cluster scores. May not be essential for virtual assessments.</td>
<td>Foundational Skills Assessments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Vocabulary</td>
<td>Measures skill in reading words and supplying appropriate meanings. This test includes two subtests: Synonyms and Antonyms.</td>
<td>Doesn’t impact broad or cluster scores. May not be essential for virtual assessments.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Other possibilities:**
- Could we have the math department create a progressive assessment that aligns with the standards that we teach and assess students’ understanding of skills that way?
- Phonics inventory could be used for older students
- Could we use the QRI, PAST, phonics inventory for ELA?
- What about using DIBELS?
- LETRS Phonics assessment
Recovery Efforts: Addressing the Provision of FAPE through Alternative Service Delivery Models for Students with Disabilities during the Re-Opening of Schools

Introduction

On March 12, 2020, the State Superintendent of Schools closed Maryland schools for in-person student instruction and extracurricular activities in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Subsequent orders extended the physical closure through the end of the 2019-2020 school year. As Maryland begins recovery efforts for the re-opening of school buildings, the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) released a draft of the Maryland Together: Maryland’s Recovery Plan for Education (Recovery Plan) to help guide local school systems and public agencies (LSSs/PAs) in their planning. The MSDE Recovery Plan, aligned with the Governor’s Maryland Strong: Roadmap to Recovery, continues to be a fluid document, shaped by information as it becomes available and through ongoing stakeholder input and feedback. The MSDE, Division of Early Intervention and Special Education Services (DEI/SES) recognizes that serving students with disabilities requires additional considerations to comply with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA): including ensuring continued access to the general education curriculum, and an IEP designed/implemented to allow the student to make progress on their Individualized Education Program (IEP) goals through changing service delivery models as school re-open.

This bulletin provides decision-making guidance to support LSSs/PAs in addressing individual student needs arising from the transition(s) to different alternative service delivery models (e.g., virtual and/or distance learning, blended, or face-to-face instruction); determining compensatory education/recovery services, as appropriate, due to the COVID-19 pandemic; and documenting those decisions in local recovery efforts. A recovery flowchart (Appendix A) is included to provide a visual representation of this process.
It is important to note that the COVID-19 outbreak has resulted in unique challenges never faced by our nation’s schools. The MSDE, DEI/SES recognizes the challenges associated with serving students with disabilities during a time of heightened health and safety needs and continues to reaffirm that special education is driven by a child-specific approach. We recognize the significant efforts that each LSS/PA is making to allow for continuity of learning during this unprecedented time and that a variety of methods are being used to support students with disabilities in the delivery of specially designed instruction and related services.

The provision of education during the pandemic continues to be an evolving situation. This document is the MSDE, DEI/SES’s interpretation of applicable IDEA statutory and regulatory requirements in the context of LSS/PA recovery efforts, based on the most recent guidance from the United States Department of Education (DOE). If further DOE guidance is released, or as other relevant information becomes available, this bulletin may be revised. Each LSS/PA is encouraged to consult with their legal counsel on specific issues that arise because of this pandemic.

**Recursive Process to Address FAPE during Recovery Efforts**

During Maryland’s response to the COVID-19 pandemic, a continuum of teaching and learning is in place (see Figure 1). Throughout the closure and re-opening process, continuity of learning models implemented in each LSS/PA has and will continue to change for both general and special education (as illustrated in green and blue respectively in Figure 1), driven by the health and safety needs of teachers, service providers, and students under the direction of the governor and State Superintendent of Schools. Each LSS/PA was required to develop a districtwide Continuity of Learning Plan for all students, including students with disabilities. Additionally, for students with disabilities, Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) were reviewed and amended/revised as appropriate to provide FAPE consistent with the districtwide continuity of learning plan and changing service delivery model.

![Figure 1. Continuum of Teaching and Learning during the Extended School Closure and Beyond.](image-url)
Now, as Maryland moves forward in recovery operations, each LSS/PA is required to develop a districtwide Recovery Plan for education. This Plan necessitates a recursive process for conducting Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) activities for students with disabilities, including:

- the ongoing progress monitoring of the student;
- the ongoing communication with families, teachers, and services providers; and
- the ongoing documentation of the student progress and services delivered.

Performing these important activities will help to support that student-specific needs arising from the transition back into school buildings, may require that additional, new, or different services and accommodations, be addressed. Each LSS/PA must also address any loss of FAPE experienced by the student and provide the necessary compensatory education/recovery services, when appropriate.

The MSDE, DEI/SES has developed a recovery flowchart (Figure 2/Appendix A) to illustrate the decision-making process each LSS/PA should follow to provide a FAPE to students with disabilities as school buildings re-open. The MSDE, DEI/SES understands that the process of re-opening schools will be dependent on the health and safety needs of the LSS/PA; therefore, there may be multiple stages of re-opening that include a variety of alternative service delivery models (e.g., virtual and/or distance learning, blended, or face-to-face instruction). No matter what the districtwide re-opening process looks like, the locally controlled Recovery Plan for education developed by each LSS/PA must continue to evaluate whether each student with a disability is being provided with a FAPE, consistent with the health and safety needs of the student and the student’s service providers.

Figure 2. Recovery Efforts: Addressing the Provision of FAPE through Alternative Service Delivery Models for Students with Disabilities during the Re-Opening of Schools. Click here for a downloadable Word document that will allow for increased readability of the flowchart using the zoom function.
Questions and Answers

Q1. What is the obligation of the LSS/PA under IDEA in transitioning students back to school buildings?

A1. Under the IDEA, the LSS/PA is responsible for providing a student with a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). During this period of extended school closure and re-opening, the FAPE obligation includes: (1) reviewing the appropriateness of the IEP in effect when a change in service delivery model occurs or when student progress monitoring indicates a lack of progress, AND (2) addressing the need for compensatory education/recovery services if there is a loss of FAPE. Depending on the process adopted by the LSS/PA to re-open school buildings, these responsibilities may need to be revisited multiple times.

As a reminder, this is a student-centered process, driven by data and the goal of continued learning for the student. All services should begin as soon as possible to prevent the student from falling behind and ensure continued progress on their IEP goals.

Q2. How should the LSS/PA prepare to make determinations about the appropriateness of the IEP in effect and the need for compensatory education/recovery services?

A2. Special education under the IDEA is centered on the individual strengths and needs of the student with a disability. All decisions related to the special education programming for the student should be driven by data. This means that before an LSS/PA can make a determination about whether the IEP in effect is appropriately written (or needs to be amended/revised), or if the student may be entitled to compensatory education/recovery services, the LSS/PA should review data on the student.

The LSS/PA should look at data prior to the extended school closure, from the period of extended school closure, and during the re-opening of schools. Data may take the form of grades, progress reports, classwork, informal/formal evaluation tools, teacher/service provider observation(s), parent feedback, comparison to the progress of all students, and interdisciplinary consults.

The LSS/PA is encouraged to work with their instructional specialists to identify assessment tools that will be used for all students as they return to the building and tools that more appropriately capture changes over shorter periods of time.

In some circumstances, it may be appropriate for the student to receive an updated formal evaluation. The LSS/PA should follow standard procedures for obtaining and documenting parent consent to perform these evaluations.

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1 A FAPE means special education and related services that are: (a) provided at public expense; (b) meet the standards of the State Education Agency; (c) include an appropriate education; and (d) are provided in conformity with an IEP that meets the student’s needs that result from the disability to enable the student to be involved in and make progress in the general education curriculum. (34 CFR §300.17). For more information on FAPE and educational standards, please see the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services Dear Colleague Letter from November 16, 2015.
Q3. How does the LSS/PA determine whether the IEP in effect is appropriate?

A3. The LSS/PA is responsible for ensuring that the student’s IEP in effect is written and implemented to enable the student to make progress in the general education curriculum and on their IEP goals. In making this determination, the LSS/PA should consider the following two questions:

1. Can the IEP in effect be implemented as written through the new service delivery model(s)?
2. Are there any new student and/or family-specific needs to be addressed resulting from the new service delivery model(s)?

If the LSS/PA service delivery model changes, then the LSS/PA must ensure the student’s IEP remains appropriate and can be implemented as written. If the IEP cannot be implemented as written, then the LSS/PA should amend or revise the IEP in effect. This continues the process that the LSS/PA followed in the initial move from face-to-face instruction to complete virtual and/or distance learning.

As under normal circumstances, the LSS/PA must review and revise, as appropriate, the IEP to address any lack of expected progress or information about the student’s needs. Each LSS/PA is responsible for ensuring that progress monitoring continues throughout this evolving situation. If the student data indicates that the student has new, additional, or different needs as a result of the extended school closure and changing service delivery model, then the IEP should be amended/revised to address those needs.

For example, a student on the Autism Spectrum may engage in escalating behaviors when their schedule changes drastically. For that student, the IEP should contemplate whether there are new, additional, or different services necessary to address those behaviors when the student re-enters the school building. Similarly, a student with an emotional disability may be experiencing an increase in anxiety attacks related to the pandemic; the IEP should contemplate how to address that anxiety in the educational context.

Q4. What are compensatory education/recovery services?

A4. Compensatory education/recovery services are a remedy available under the IDEA for a loss of a FAPE. While compensatory education/recovery services are traditionally awarded when an LSS/PA has failed to meet their legal obligations, these services are not intended as a punishment for the LSS/PA. The purpose of compensatory education/recovery services is to remediate the negative impact experienced by the student due to the loss of FAPE.

The MSDE, DEI/SES recognizes that during this period of extended school closure and heightened health and safety needs, an LSS/PA may not have been able to provide some specially designed instruction, related services, and supplementary aids and supports. While this may have occurred through no fault of the LSS/PA, the obligation to provide a student with a FAPE remains, and the student may be entitled to remedial services. The MSDE,
DEI/SES has chosen to refer to these services as “compensatory education/recovery services” to both acknowledge the uniqueness of the situation, but also to remind the LSS/PA that the determination process remains the same.

Q5. How does the LSS/PA determine if compensatory education/recovery services are required?

A5. As was shared at the outset of the closure of school buildings, the IDEA does not provide for a waiver of a FAPE during the COVID-19 pandemic. The United States Department of Education and the MSDE, DEI/SES have shared that if there is a delay in determining or providing appropriate services during extended school closure resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, individualized determinations must be made about whether, and to what extent, compensatory education/recovery services may be needed.

During these exceptional times, a FAPE must be provided consistent with the need to protect the health and safety of students with disabilities and those individuals providing education services to these students. Therefore, LSSs/PAs were instructed to provide a FAPE to the maximum extent possible during the period of virtual and/or distance learning (and should continue to do so as schools re-open) to mitigate the need for compensatory education/recovery services. This is NOT a waiver of the FAPE requirement under IDEA.2

While a student is not guaranteed a specific educational outcome, the law requires that the student receive an appropriate educational program. Therefore, LSSs/PAs will need to determine whether the educational services provided to the student during the period of school closure and re-opening, pursuant to the IEP (or Amended/Revised IEP), were reasonable to allow the student to be involved in and make progress in the general education curriculum and on their IEP goals.

In situations where a FAPE (i.e., instruction, related services, and supplementary aids and supports) was not or could not be provided, and the student was negatively impacted (i.e., a regression of skills or lack of progress in the curriculum or on IEP goals), the student will require compensatory education/recovery services.

The decision about whether the student is owed compensatory education/recovery services is driven by information and data collected from a variety of sources. This information will guide the IEP decision-making process. Important information for the LSS/PA to collect and consider, includes:

- Data on the student’s progress prior to and during the school closure to assess academic and/or behavioral progress in the general education curriculum and on the student’s IEP goal(s). Data may take the form of grades, progress reports, classwork, informal/formal

2 Blanket policies adopted by LSSs/PAs during the school closure to not provide certain special education and related services is NOT an individualized determination about what a student requires for a FAPE; therefore, the LSS/PA will need to address whether the student requires compensatory/recovery services due to this LSS/PA decision.
evaluation tools, teacher/service provider observation(s), parent feedback, comparison to the progress of all students, and interdisciplinary consults.

- Data on the student’s ability to recoup skills and make progress on IEP goals upon the return to school.
- Documentation of accommodations and/or services provided (e.g., amount of instruction and services including dates, times, and duration), as well as accommodations and/or services the LSS/PA was unable to provide during the extended school closure and re-opening of school.
- Length of school closure (e.g., time without any instruction, time with virtual and/or distance learning, etc.), including information related to the general education curriculum provided to all students and the student’s ability to access virtual and/or distance learning opportunities.

The LSS/PA must consider what compensatory education/recovery services can be provided to the student to help recoup the lack of progress due to a loss of a FAPE. They must be individualized to each student’s needs and designed to remediate the loss of skills.

The compensatory education/recovery services award will not always reflect the same services (nature, amount, frequency) that were missed. Decisions about the individual student’s compensatory education/recovery services award should be made collaboratively with the parent. Creativity in identifying compensatory education/recovery services will be necessary and may include the scheduling and delivery of services through an extended school day, weekends, and/or summer. It is important for the IEP team to remember that awarded services should supplement, and not supplant, the student’s IEP.

Q6. How must the determination of the need for compensatory education/recovery services be documented?

A6. LSS/PAs may use the same documentation processes they have traditionally employed to capture determinations of compensatory education/recovery services. However, it is important to ensure that there is documentation that the parent and those responsible for implementing the compensatory/recovery services have been informed of the decision so that it will be implemented. Documentation may include:

- holding an IEP team meeting to make the determination and documenting in the Prior Written Notice (PWN);
- discussing with the parent outside of the IEP team meeting and, with parent agreement, documenting in writing; or
- discussing with the parent outside of the IEP team meeting and, if the parent disagrees, documenting in the PWN.

If an agreement cannot be reached, either inside or outside of the IEP team meeting, the parent must be provided with Prior Written Notice, so the parent has the opportunity to exercise the procedural safeguards to resolve any dispute.
Q7. How long does the LSS/PA have to consider the need for and to provide compensatory education/recovery services?

A7. Decisions about compensatory education/recovery services should be made as soon as reasonably possible based on the availability of data. As valid data on student performance is necessary to make determinations regarding whether compensatory education/recovery services are owed to a student, the MSDE, DEI/SES recognizes that the timing of these determinations may vary. Each LSS/PA should exercise its discretion in ensuring there is both appropriate data to make thoughtful decisions and no unreasonable delay in serving students.3

The DOE has informed States that, in carrying out the responsibility for general supervision of the LSS/PA, when noncompliance is identified, it must be corrected within one (1) year from the date of identification of noncompliance. Therefore, during this evolving situation, as information arises that a student has experienced a loss of FAPE requiring compensatory/recovery services, the LSS/PA should generally provide those services within one (1) year of the determination of the services.

However, in some circumstances, providing a remedy could take more than one (1) year to complete. For example, there may be an insufficient amount of time in a school day to provide a student with the compensatory education/recovery services within one (1) year while providing ongoing IEP services, and the student may not be available for services outside of school hours. If it is anticipated that the services will need to be provided over a length of time that exceeds one (1) year, this decision and the basis for the decision should be included as part of the documentation of the compensatory education/recovery services determination.

As with the provision of compensatory education/recovery services for the loss of a FAPE under normal circumstances, an individualized decision must be made for each student with respect to the period of time over which the services will be provided. That decision, like all decisions regarding a FAPE, should be based on the student’s needs and not administrative convenience.

Q8. Can students be provided with Extended School Year (ESY) services to satisfy the requirement for compensatory/recovery services?

A8. No. The purpose of ESY services and compensatory/recovery services differ. The purpose of compensatory/recovery services is to address the loss of a FAPE during the extended closure of school buildings due to the COVID-19 outbreak. The purpose of ESY services is to ensure that the student maintains the critical life skills growth achieved during the regular school year in the following school year.

The standards used to determine the need for ESY and compensatory/recovery services also differ. When determining the need for compensatory/recovery services, an IEP team must

3 The LSS/PA must ensure that the IEP team considers any information or concerns provided by the parent in a timely manner.
determine whether the loss of a FAPE resulted in the student not receiving the educational benefit.

When addressing ESY services, the IEP team must determine whether the benefits a student gains during the regular school year will be significantly jeopardized if the student does not continue to be provided with the educational program during the school break. When making that determination, the IEP team must consider several specific factors, which are indicators of whether a student is working on critical life skills and will be able to recoup any regression of those skills experienced during the break in the school year within a reasonable amount of time after the next school year begins.

Local school systems/public agencies may choose to offer compensatory education/recovery services, when appropriate, using the ESY services model. In such cases, compensatory/recovery services provided during the summer may supplement – but not supplant – the provision of ESY services for students who require ESY services as a part of their IEP. Therefore, it is important to carefully document the services provided through the summer program that are ESY services in nature, and those that are compensatory/recovery services in nature. Additional information about ESY services can be found in the MSDE supplement to Technical Assistance Bulletins #20-01 and #20-03, entitled, Extended School Year (ESY) Services during the COVID-19-Pandemic (see Appendix B).

Q9. What happens if a parent disagrees with an offer of compensatory education/recovery services?

A9. If an agreement cannot be reached with the parent regarding compensatory education/recovery services, the IEP team must document the determination, and the parent must be provided with PWN of the decision so that the parent has the opportunity to exercise the procedural safeguards to resolve any dispute.

Q10. Can parents require the LSS/PA to enroll students who received a Maryland High School Diploma at the end of the 2019-2020 school year or who will turn 21 before the start of the 2020-2021 school year in another year of school because they experienced a loss of FAPE during the extended closure of school buildings?

A10. A parent cannot require the LSS/PA to re-enroll a student who has graduated with a Maryland High School Diploma or “aged out” of special education. A student’s eligibility for FAPE under the IDEA terminates if a Maryland High School Diploma is awarded or the student exceeds the age for provision of IDEA services, which in Maryland is the end of the school year in which the student turns 21.

If there has been a loss of FAPE for such a student, then the LSS/PA should consider whether the student needs compensatory education/recovery services. However, compensatory education/recovery services must be designed to remediate what was lost and is not simply a repeat of the last year of school with the same services that were required prior to the end of the 2019-2020 school year.
Q11. What happens if a student graduated with a Maryland Certificate of Completion at the end of the 2019-2020 school year, but experienced a loss of FAPE during the extended closure of school buildings during the year?

A11. So long as the student will not reach the age of 21 before the start of the 2020-2021 school year, the student is entitled to re-enroll for next school year, regardless of whether the student experienced a loss of FAPE during the 2019-2020 school.

Alternatively, compensatory/recovery services can be considered for the student without re-enrolling the student in school for another year. As with a student who is awarded a Maryland High School Diploma, consideration of compensatory/recovery services is also an option if the student’s eligibility for FAPE will terminate upon reaching the age of 21 prior to the start of the 2020-2021 school year.

Q12. Can LSSs/PAs use funding available under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act) in providing compensatory education/recovery services?

A12. Yes. In addition to traditional special education funding sources, additional monies included in the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSERF) component of the CARES ACT (P.L. 116-136) may also be used for special education costs incurred to prevent, prepare for, and respond to the coronavirus. Local school systems and public agencies (LSSs/PAs) may use these funds for the following expenses:

- Activities to address the unique outreach and service delivery needs of students with disabilities. (P.L. 116-136 § 18003[d][4]).
- Planning for and coordinating during long-term closure to ensure special education services continue to be provided consistent with Federal, State, and local requirements. (P.L. 116-136 § 18003[d][8]).
- Educational technology (including hardware, software, and connectivity) for students with disabilities who are served by the LEA that supports regular and substantive education interaction between students and instructors (which may include assistive technology or adaptive equipment). (P.L. 116-136 § 18003[d][9]).
- Planning and implementing activities related to summer learning and supplemental after school programs, including providing classroom instruction or online learning during the summer months to address the needs of students with disabilities. (P.L. 116-136 § 18003[d][11]).

Please refer to the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act) Supplement distributed on 6/4/2020 for additional ESSERF information/guidance (Appendix C). Funding made available to LSSs/PAs through the ESSERF will remain available through September 30, 2021. Local school systems and public agencies (LSSs/PAs) may use these funds any time prior to September 30, 2021, including when school would not normally be in session, such as during evenings, weekends, summer months, or other breaks.
Recovery Efforts: Addressing the Provision of FAPE through Alternative Service Delivery Models for Students with Disabilities during the Re-Opening of Schools

Click here for a downloadable Word document that will allow for increased readability of the flowchart using the zoom function.
Extended School Year (ESY) Services during the COVID-19 Pandemic

This document has been created as a supplement to Technical Assistance Bulletin (TAB) #20-01, Serving Children with Disabilities under IDEA during school closures due to the COVID-19 Pandemic and TAB #20-03: Providing Continuity of Learning to Students with Disabilities during COVID-19. Please refer to these TABs for additional information and guidance on the provision of special education services to students with disabilities during this unprecedented time.

A flowchart to support the local school system or public agency (LSSs/PAs) in determining Extended School Year (ESY) services due to the extended school closure in response to the COVID-19 pandemic is included. This document also contains questions and answers that highlight the eligibility decision-making and documentation requirements for ESY services. Most students should already have an ESY services eligibility determination made by the IEP team for Summer 2020. However, there may be some circumstances related to the extended school closure in which the team has not made an ESY services eligibility determination. For these students, the LSS/PA should address ESY eligibility as soon as possible.

**Extended School Year (ESY) Services during the COVID-19 Pandemic**

![Flowchart](image)

*Figure 1. A flowchart to support LSSs/PAs in determining Extended School Year (ESY) Services during extended school closure due to the COVID-19 pandemic.*
Questions and Answers

Q. What are Extended School Year (ESY) services and what is the difference between making the ESY determination and determining recovery opportunities to be provided because of the closure of school buildings due to the national COVID-19 pandemic?

A. Most students experience some regression of skill development made during the regular school year after extended breaks in the school year, such as during the summer months. Many of these students will recoup, within a reasonable amount of time, what they lost during the extended break in school once school resumes.

Some students with disabilities will not be able to recoup the skills lost during the extended break in school within a reasonable amount of time after school resumes. In order to ensure that these students maintain the skills growth they achieved during the regular school year, Extended School Year (ESY) services are provided to address specific areas of the IEP during extended periods of time that school is not in session, such as the summer months.

The determination of the need for ESY services is different than the decision that the student requires recovery opportunities as a result of the closure of school buildings during the national COVID-19 pandemic. The recovery opportunities should be designed to address the loss of skills or lack of progress that a student was expected to obtain during the regular school year, but did not obtain because the instruction was provided through virtual learning since the third quarter of the 2019-2020 school year.

Q. Will all students with disabilities be provided ESY services?

A. No. The ESY determination is individualized to the student.

Q. What is the LSS’s/PA’s obligation if the IEP team has not yet determined the student’s need for ESY services during the summer of 2020?

A. If the IEP team has not made an ESY decision, and the parties are able to reach agreement with respect to whether the student requires these services, the IEP should be amended and the agreement documented. Amendment to the IEP occurs outside of the IEP team meeting.

If the IEP team has not made an ESY decision, and there is no agreement between the LSS/PA and the parent with respect to whether the student requires these services, the LSS/PA must attempt to convene the IEP team by alternative means, such as by teleconference, as soon as possible following the standard decision-making and documentation requirements. This includes providing the parent with Prior Written Notice (PWN) of the ESY determination.

If the IEP team is unable to meet, the existing IEP must be implemented. If the existing IEP requires ESY services, those services must be provided.
If the existing IEP does not require ESY services, the IEP team must meet as soon as possible following the re-opening of school buildings to make the determination. If the IEP team determines that the student requires ESY services, it must also determine the recovery opportunities that can be provided to the student during the regular school year to redress the loss of ESY services.

Q. What are the legal requirements for the IEP team when determining the need for ESY services?

A. When considering the need for ESY services, the IEP team must consider the following factors: 1. Whether the student’s Individualized Education Program (IEP) include annual goals related to critical life skills; 2. Whether there is a likelihood of substantial regression of critical life skills caused by the normal school break in the regular school year and an inability to recover those lost skills in a reasonable amount of time when school resumes; 3. The presence of emerging skills or breakthrough opportunities; 4. Interfering behaviors; 5. The nature and severity of the disability; and 6. Special circumstances.

The IEP team must document the consideration of each of these factors, describing the data used as a basis for decisions made with respect to each factor.

Following the consideration of the above factors, the IEP team must determine whether the benefits the student gains during the regular school year will be significantly jeopardized if the student is not provided with an educational program during a normal break in the regular school year. If the answer is yes, the student requires ESY services. If the answer is no, the student does not require ESY services.

Q. Will the legal requirements for the provision of ESY services differ during the extended closure of school buildings due to the national COVID-19 pandemic?

A. No. Since Maryland resumed instruction after the initial couple of weeks of the national COVID-19 pandemic through virtual learning, the school year continues. Therefore, any student whose IEP requires ESY services must be provided with those services, to the greatest extent possible, through the service delivery method (e.g., face-to-face instruction, virtual or other distance learning strategies, etc.) under the discretion of the State and local Superintendents, consistent with health and safety needs. Even if the student’s ESY services plan was developed prior to the extended school closure, it is recommended that school staff review the existing plan and consult with parents on the service delivery model for Summer 2020.
Q. May some students require both ESY services and recovery opportunities due to the COVID-19 pandemic during the summer of 2020?

A. Yes; however, it is important to note that ESY services and recovery services are separate and distinct. These services serve different purposes and require separate eligibility analyses. Therefore, LSSs/PAs must follow the eligibility criteria and documentation for ESY services as outlined above. The DEI/SES will issue guidance on recovery services separately.
**CARES Act Sec 18003 - Uses of Funds**

- Any activity authorized by:
  - ESEA
  - IDEA
  - CTE (Perkins)
  - McKinney-Vento (Title VII-B)
- Coordination of preparedness and response efforts of local educational agencies with State, local, Tribal, and territorial public health departments, and other relevant agencies, to improve coordinated responses among such entities to prevent, prepare for, and respond to coronavirus.
- Providing principals and other school leaders with the resources necessary to address the needs of their individual schools.
- Developing and implementing procedures and systems to improve the preparedness and response efforts of LSSs.
- Other activities that are necessary to maintain the operation of and continuity of services in LSSs and continuing to employ existing staff of the LSS.

**Examples of specific activities which could be implemented (This is not an exhaustive list)**

- Convene local leadership teams to review and revise, as necessary, continuity of learning plans and emergency preparedness plans to ensure the needs of all students.
- Work with community-based organizations to identify needs and provide support for students experiencing homelessness during coronavirus including, but not limited to, immunizations, food, medical & dental services (as appropriate), eyeglasses and hearing aids, counseling services to address anxiety, and mental health issues.
- Provide professional development to teachers and staff members on the use of technology and delivering virtual instruction and services to support students, including students with disabilities and/or language needs.
- Offer training to parents and families on how to provide and/or support instruction in the home.
- Survey the technology needs for students to ensure access to virtual instruction as appropriate.
- Provide professional development for teachers on using universal screening or benchmark assessments, specially designed instruction, and the delivery of skill specific interventions.
- Provide experienced coaches to guide teachers in the delivery of content.
- Partner with the community experts to provide access to college and career options via virtual tours, discussions, and other means.
- Establish mentoring and/or tutoring program for students.
**CARES Act Sec 18003 - Uses of Funds**

- Activities to address the unique needs of:
  - low-income children or students,
  - Students with disabilities,
  - English learners,
  - Students of racial or ethnic minorities,
  - Students experiencing homelessness, and
  - Foster care youth.

- Planning for and coordinating during long-term closures, including:
  - Providing meals to eligible students,
  - Providing technology for online learning to all students,
  - Providing guidance for carrying out requirements under the IDEA
  - Ensuring other educational services can continue to be provided consistent with all Federal, State, and local requirements.

**Examples of specific activities which could be implemented (This is not an exhaustive list)**

- Develop local school system action plans to address the local-identified priority issues impacting all students including specific activities that may meet the needs of a specific demographic group.

- Implement local level plans that include the following components for all students:
  - Ensuring students have access to full-functioning technology and assistive technology;
  - Providing consultation, coaching, and support to parents and families of students, including students with disabilities, English learners, racial and ethnic minorities, students experiencing homelessness, and children in foster care;
  - Adopting best practices in instruction, academic, and behavioral support of students with disabilities;
  - Adopting best practices in remote/virtual instructional practices;
  - Coordinating the delivery of instruction and services throughout the system; and
  - Timely notifications to parents such as a change in policy when school will resume and with what restrictions.
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- Review local school system plans to ensure issues facing students experiencing homelessness are addressed such as access to virtual instructional, internet access, and technology.
- Purchase supplies such as backpacks and school supplies necessary for remote instruction, including notebooks, pens/pencils, paper for students experiencing homelessness.
- Provide compensatory education services and compensatory related services through contracts with related service providers.
- Increase budgets beyond contractual obligations for related service providers employed by the local school system.
- Provide additional instructional and academic opportunities, such as summer academies, tutoring, enrichment programs, online intervention programs, or extension activities offered to students in addition to the services included in a student’s IEP.
- Purchase assistive technology devices to ensure student access to content and instruction.
- Provide training for parents/families and staff on the use of technology devices during periods of virtual instruction.
- Ensure access to technology during periods of virtual learning by contracting with internet service providers.
- Deliver ongoing professional development for teachers and staff on effective instructional practices, including implementation of student IEPs during periods of virtual learning.
- Offer after-school hours or summer programs to provide supplemental instruction.
- Establish a collaborative team of system personnel and stakeholders to create, implement, and review action plans around system preparedness.
- Provide professional development for local school system staff on the unique needs of students experiencing homelessness.
- Provide additional instructional services to address gaps in learning.
- Provide professional development on coordinating resources to accommodate high needs interventions.
- Increase the number of contracted staff members to provide services to students.
- Deliver training and professional development on best practices in delivering instruction, academic, and behavioral supports.
- Provide increased outreach through community-based organizations and district personnel to address issues such as food insecurity and medical needs.
- Contract additional staff or outside vendors to provide counseling to address anxiety and mental health for at-risk students.
- Provide professional development for teachers to explain to parents, guardians and students good work habits (e.g., independent work, self-motivation, organizational skills, self-care, educational and health-related resources, etc.)
- Support mentors for students, especially from special populations.
- Invest in technology and partner with industry partners that may be able to allow work-based learning coordinators to conduct virtual/remote observations of students.

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<tr>
<th>CARES Act Sec 18003 - Uses of Funds</th>
<th>Examples of specific activities which could be implemented (This is not an exhaustive list)</th>
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</table>
| • Training and professional development for LSS staff on sanitation and minimizing the spread of infectious diseases.  
• Purchase of supplies to sanitize and clean LSS facilities.                                                        | • Purchase cleaning supplies, and/or sanitizing stations and supplies for schools and administrative buildings, as well as for staff.  
• Provide brochures and/or training for families on best practices for social distancing and limiting the spread of the virus in multiple languages.  
• Provide training to paraprofessionals and classroom/teacher aides on how to support students with hygiene best practices.  
• Contract with agencies and/or hire staff to assist with training students to utilize and maintain hygiene best practices.  
• Provide professional development for staff in developing tiered interventions and supports for students to maintain best |
- Provide items of clothing or hygiene products for students in need; e.g. students experiencing homelessness.
- Hire staff to clean and sanitize buildings, grounds, and classrooms.
- Install sanitization stations in the schools.
- Purchase disinfectant materials needed specifically for CTE lab equipment and supplies.

### CARES Act Sec 18003 - Uses of Funds

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<th>Examples of specific activities which could be implemented (This is not an exhaustive list)</th>
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<tr>
<td>- Purchasing educational technology (including hardware, software, and connectivity) for students who are served by the LSS that supports regular and substantive educational interaction between students and their classroom instructors, including low-income students and students with disabilities (which may include assistive technology or adaptive equipment).</td>
<td>- Ensure access to technology and the internet during periods of virtual learning by contracting with internet service providers; e.g. mobile hotspots and chrome books.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Ensure access to technology and the internet during periods of virtual learning by contracting with internet service providers; e.g. mobile hotspots and chrome books.</td>
<td>- Deliver ongoing professional development for teachers and staff on effective instructional practices, including implementation of student IEPs during periods of virtual learning.</td>
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<td>- Deliver ongoing professional development for teachers and staff on effective instructional practices, including implementation of student IEPs during periods of virtual learning.</td>
<td>- Offer after-school hours or summer programs to provide supplemental instruction for at-risk students.</td>
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<td>- Provide parent training and ongoing consultation to facilitate effective support of students in the home during periods of virtual and remote learning.</td>
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<td>- Provide parent training and ongoing consultation to facilitate effective support of students in the home during periods of virtual and remote learning.</td>
<td>- Establish a collaborative team of local school system personnel and stakeholders to create, implement, and review action plans around system preparedness.</td>
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<td>- Purchase assistive technology devices (AT) and/or related components to ensure student devices can be provided, repaired, and replaced.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Purchase assistive technology devices (AT) and/or related components to ensure student devices can be provided, repaired, and replaced.</td>
<td>- Deliver training and technical assistance to teachers, staff, students, and parents/families on the use of AT devices.</td>
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<td>- Deliver training and technical assistance to teachers, staff, students, and parents/families on the use of AT devices.</td>
<td>- Purchase licenses for online programs or downloadable content for use by students with disabilities, at-risk students, and English language learners.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Purchase licenses for online programs or downloadable content for use by students with disabilities, at-risk students, and English language learners.</td>
<td>- Purchase software applications that support academic instruction, licenses for online learning platforms, subscriptions, or</td>
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downloadable content for use by students with disabilities or at-risk students.

- Ensure accessibility of all programs, devices, and content for instruction for students.
- Review system level plans to ensure issues facing students experiencing homelessness are addressed such as access to virtual instructional, internet access, and technology.
- Contract directly with internet providers to ensure internet access for students.
- Provide professional development to all staff on delivering intervention services remotely.
- Deliver ongoing professional development for teachers and staff on effective instructional practices, including implementation of student IEPs during periods of virtual learning.
- Purchase supplies necessary for remote instruction in the home, such as flash drives, ink, notebooks, pens/pencils, paper, and binders, as well as postage to mail these materials when necessary.
- Evaluate the needs of individual courses for specific needs such as printers, microscopes, health monitoring equipment and determine appropriate ways to share or access the equipment.

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<th>CARES Act Sec 18003 - Uses of Funds</th>
<th>Examples of specific activities which could be implemented (This is not an exhaustive list)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Providing mental health services and supports.</td>
<td>Provide professional development for staff regarding mental health impacts of COVID 19 and aggressive social distancing on students.</td>
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<td>Hire contracted staff to provide direct mental health or support services to students.</td>
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<td>Acquire licenses for online or downloadable content that supports the mental health needs of students.</td>
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<td>Acquire HIPAA/FERPA compliant virtual and remote platforms for the delivery of counseling services.</td>
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<td>Contract with community mental partners and agencies to provide assessment and evaluation services to determine mental health needs of students and their families.</td>
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- Provide counseling, telehealth, mentoring, and therapeutic services and supports, to address non-academic skills that impact learning, such as anxiety, behavioral supports, drug abuse, suicide prevention, and bullying strategies.
- Provide professional development for staff on providing tiered mental health supports to students.
- Contract with community partners to enhance tiered mental health supports and interventions for students.
- Hire counseling staff to implement tiered mental health supports and interventions for students.
- Provide training and resources to parents, students, community members on the recognition and prevention of coercion, violence, abuse, human trafficking and abuse.

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<th>Sec 18003 ESSR Uses of Funds</th>
<th>Examples of specific activities which could be implemented (This is not an exhaustive list)</th>
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| Planning and implementing activities related to summer learning and supplemental afterschool programs, including providing classroom instruction or online learning during the summer months and addressing the needs of:  
  o Students living in poverty  
  o Students with disabilities  
  o English learners  
  o Migrant students  
  o Students experiencing homelessness  
  o Foster care youth | Deliver services during extended school year programs and/or summer enrichment programs for all students.  
  Provide tutoring programs outside normal school hours to address student needs.  
  Provide compensatory educational services to students with disabilities.  
  Deliver extension activities outside normal school hours to support a successful return to school.  
  Provide extra supports aligned to the local school system’s regular education program, which may include services to assist preschool children in the transition from early childhood education programs to elementary school programs (also, the transition from elementary to middle school and middle school to high school).  
  Offer career and technical education services to prepare all students for postsecondary education and the workforce (e.g., virtual job-shadowing, resume writing, interview skills, etc.).  
  Provide basic instruction on trouble-shooting and the maintenance of technology, |
- Connectivity, file-sharing, remote tech support, etc.
- Create CTE summer bridge program for students who are transitioning from Middle School to High School.
For more information, call 410-767-0249

MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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Governor
Guidance for Preparing Online Teachers to Work with Special Education Students

Mary F. Rice and Daryl Mellard
December 2016

Millions of K-12 learners are currently involved some form of online learning. Generally, three major settings of online learning are available. Those settings are fully online, blended, or supplemental online learning.

Students enrolled in fully online schools receive all their instruction and content through online sources. Their teachers and course materials are online, as are their classmates. Students do their coursework from a home or other domestic space or in a public space such as a library with the use of WiFi to connect to the Internet (Rice, East, & Mellard, 2015a).

In blended learning settings, students receive at least part of their learning online but they also have in-person classroom time with teachers and classmates. Some teachers set up blended learning so that when students are engaged in online activities they are engaged in learning new information and when they are with the teacher in the classroom they practice what they learned online (Staker & Horn, 2012). Another option is that the online instruction is used to supplement and practice the skills that are taught in the classroom setting.

Finally, students enroll in supplemental online learning when they want to take an online course not offered by their district or school. The subject area might be a course that the district either does not have enough students to enroll (e.g. advanced math course) or does not have certified teachers to offer the course. In this situation, students take the course as a supplement to their program and the course is fully online while all their other courses are in traditional classrooms with teachers and classmates (Watson, Pape, Murin, Gemin, & Vashaw, 2014).

As entire schools and districts are engaging in blended and supplemental learning initiatives, students with disabilities come into these environments because they are already in the school (iNACOL, 2015). Still others are enrolling in charter schools that already incorporate (or plan to use) online learning as part of their instructional delivery (Watson, Pape, Murin, Gemin, & Vashaw, 2014). Regardless of which type of online learning is involved or how students become involved in it, students with disabilities need support to access and process content to maximize their learning and reach their potential (Basham, Stahl, Ortiz, Rice, & Smith, 2015).
While parents and other adults assume increased roles in helping students who are working online, teachers who are prepared and supported are also necessary (Waters & Leong, 2014). Further for students with disabilities, teachers are a critical conduit between students and the services to which they are legally entitled (Greer, Rowland, & Smith, 2014). These services are given to help students “derive educational benefit” from special education and were incepted to help children participate in all aspects of community life, but particularly a school (IDEA, 2004).

The purpose of this brief document is to provide guidance to teacher educators as individuals and as committees that are preparing teacher candidates to work with students with disabilities in online learning environments. The document provides an overview of initial findings and themes from COLSD research and activities on preparing online teachers to work with students with disabilities, shares what institutions that prepare online teachers can do to help their candidates understand how to serve students with disabilities, and then offers additional resources in terms of additional publications relevant to the topic.

**Preliminary findings from forums and themes on teacher preparation for online special education**

COLSD staff have conducted a number of research activities, forums, discussion groups, and interviews. Some of the preliminary findings are included in the following list and where applicable supported with other researchers’ findings.

1. Online teachers who are assigned to work with students with disabilities generally have a high turnover in all types of programs. (Rice, East, & Mellard, 2015b).
2. Online teachers in all types of programs (including those who are assigned to work with students with disabilities) report little to no previous preparation in online learning. (Carter & Rice, 2016; Crouse, Rice, & Mellard, 2016; Kennedy & Archambault, 2012; Rice, East, & Mellard, 2015b).
3. Fully online teacher educators report that they teach their prospective teachers about the importance of one-on-one instruction, relationship building, collegiality, parent collaboration and Internet safety (Smith, Basham, Rice, & Carter, 2016).
4. Teacher educators report that they do not teach their prospective teachers about instructional planning for differentiation, personalization, data interpretation, or shifting legalities in online educational settings because of limited information available on these topics (Rice, Mellard, & Carter, 2016).
5. Online practicum experiences, program models and examples, and greater guidance from standards-making bodies have been identified as critical for improving online teacher preparation (Franklin, East, & Mellard, 2015; Kennedy & Archambault, 2012; Rice, Mellard, & Carter, 2016).

To learn more about preparing teachers to work with students with disabilities in online settings, researchers held several group interviews. These interviews were held with multiple stakeholders over a period of nearly two years and included state special education directors, superintendents and other high level administrators in online programs, vendors of online
curriculum, and special education teacher educators working online teacher preparation. The critical findings from these focus groups have been cited above, but all forum reports are available at centerononlinelearning.org.

Another research activity occurred as special education teacher educators were invited to discuss online learning. These participants were selected from among the 325k (teacher preparation) and 325t (technology) grant awardees receiving funding from the Office of Special Education Program (OSEP). In addition, COLSD researchers invited presenters from the Council of Exceptional Children (CEC) 2016 annual conference who were presenting about teacher preparation for online missing a word here (supplementary, fully online, credit recovery or technologically enhanced learning to the group interview sessions). Nineteen teacher educators and researchers agreed to participate in these groups interviews. Nine of those who agreed to attend, did so. Participants met with researchers at the 2016 CEC annual meeting in St. Louis, Missouri. During the group interview, participants discussed (1) efforts to prepare special education to work in online settings, (2) approaches to this preparation, (3) concerns with achieving this preparation, and (4) navigating barriers to increasing preparation. In addition, participants responded to a short survey in which contextual information about their department and responsibilities were collected and they responded regarding their comfort with designing courses and practical experiences for prospective teachers and their respective institutions. The findings from these discussions are presented in Rice, Mellard, and Carter (2016). The data obtained from these interviews and the survey were analyzed using two rounds of coding: open and thematic (Boyatzis, 1998). Based on what we learned during this process, we offer the following guidance.

What teacher educators can do to prepare teachers for online special education

- Become generally aware of the current state of K-12 online learning enrollment, persistence, and instructional trends;
- Discuss online teaching as a viable teaching pathway and draw attention to the diversity of learners within it;
- Attend conferences, read articles, sign up for listservs, or engage in other strategies to become aware of promising online practices with regards to students with disabilities;
- Volunteer for standards-making discussions, advocacy groups, or other assemblies in which teacher educators who are preparing teachers for online special education can be heard;
- When and where possible, find opportunities to learn to instruct teacher education courses online and to the greatest extent possible, be meta-pedagogical during these courses (talk about why and how you set up the online course the way you did for content learning and accessibility and what you would change if the students were children).
What teacher preparation programs can do to prepare teacher online special education

- Provide opportunities for all teacher educators to learn to instruct teacher education courses online;
- Cultivate relationships with online schools of various configurations (fully online, supplemental, credit recovery, blended) for practica and student teaching experiences;
- Normalize though literature, in program literature and other places online settings (fully online, supplemental, credit recovery, blended) as viable pathways with the teaching profession;
- Prioritize professional development for instructors (tenure track and non-tenure track) around online teacher preparation and preparation for online teaching.

For further information on teacher educators’ and teacher education programs’ roles and responsibilities for students with disabilities in online settings, please consult the website of the Center on Online Learning and Students with Disabilities at http://centerononlinelearning.org. Related reports are included under the Publications section of the website.

The contents of this manuscript, “Guidance for Preparing Online Teachers to Work with Special Education Students” were developed under a grant from the US Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) Cooperative Agreement #H327U110011 with the University of Kansas, and member organizations the Center for Applied Special Technology (CAST), and the National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE). However, the contents of this paper do not necessarily represent the policy of the US Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government.

This report is in the public domain. Readers are free to distribute copies of this paper and the recommended citation is:

Rice, M., & Mellard, D. (2016). Guidance for Preparing Online Teachers to Work with Special Education Students. Lawrence, KS. Center on Online Learning and Students with Disabilities, University of Kansas.
References


Rice, M., East, T., & Mellard, D.F. (2015a). *Online learning access within and across schools: Superintendent forum proceedings (Report No. 9)*. Lawrence, KS: Center on Online Learning and Students with Disabilities, University of Kansas.


**Additional Resources**


**Transportation for Students with Disabilities**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transportation IDEA (Part B) includes:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(i) Travel to and from school and between schools,</td>
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<tr>
<td>(ii) Travel in and around school buildings, and</td>
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<tr>
<td>(iii) Special equipment such as special or adapted buses, lifts, and ramps, if</td>
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<td>required to provide special transportation for a child with a disability (34 CFR</td>
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<td>§300.34 (c)(10) (Note 3)</td>
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<p>| Transportation is a related service on the IEP (special needs bus or approved |
| alternative vehicle) in accordance with CGS/150 J.A. 2400 (Student |</p>
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<th>Transportation Requirements)</th>
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<tr>
<td>The steps below are predicated on</td>
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<td>the availability of transportation</td>
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<td>service in the local school district</td>
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<td>(LSS), using the same special needs</td>
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<td>school buses or approved alternative</td>
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<td>delivery service vehicles prior to</td>
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<td>COVID-19.</td>
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<th>Transportation is not a current related service on the IEP</th>
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<td>The steps below are predicated on the need for the IEP related service transportation, required as a result of the impact of COVID-19 to access FAPE.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Transportation IDEA B Section IDEA related service required as a result of COVID-19</th>
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<td>The following essential considerations are directly related to the impact of COVID-19</td>
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<td>on the ability of students with disabilities to access the IDEA related service</td>
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<td>transportation.</td>
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| Students with disabilities, to comply with LSS policies and procedures, should be assessed on a case-by-case basis by the LSS IEP teams, including appropriate membership, to assure safe transportation. |

| Transportation Department should not be permitted to make unilateral decisions regarding any change in the provision of the IDEA or Section 504 related service transportation. All changes are required to be made by the IEP team with appropriate representation to assure safe transportation. |

| Additional and revised driver and attendant training will be required to assure safe transportation for all students with disabilities on regular buses, special needs buses, and alternative vehicles to provide safe transportation in compliance with LSS transportation policies and procedures post COVID-19. |

| Parent information will be necessary to be developed, implemented, and disseminated, to assure an understanding of new LSS transportation policies and procedures, impacting the provision of safe transportation and FAPE. |

| Specific students with disabilities will provide extraordinary challenges. Multidisciplinary, qualified LSS personnel, will be vital to assure the ability to address safe transportation and protection for transportation drivers and attendants, alike. (Example child that bites, spits, runner, non-compliant with bus rules or does not have the cognitive capacity to understand bus rules.) |

| Students with significant cognitive limitations, inappropriate behaviors impacting safe transportation LSS policies and procedures including the impact of physical disabilities on the school bus ride should be carefully reviewed by the IEP team, to ensure safe transportation. (Example: wheelchair securment and child safety restraint system use.) |

| The use of specialized equipment such as oxygen, ventilators, etc. should be reviewed by the IEP team to assure compliance with LSS policies and procedures. |

| The review of medically fragile student IEP's, should include appropriate service providers such as nurses, physical and occupational therapists and a member of the transportation team to assure the appropriate provision of the IDEA related service transportation and the impact of that of the COVID-19. |

| All students with an IEP and the related service transportation, riding on a special needs bus should have an IEP review to assure that no changes will be required to transportation as a result of COVID-19. |

| Discuss student’s with IEP’s, receiving the related service transportation, in need of Travel Training in order to prevent the need for a more restrictive transportation mode of service delivery. (Example: Special Needs Bus) |

| The requirement to follow LSS policies and procedures at a school bus stop are essential in accessing transportation. |

| Travel training is a key special education service to reinforce the ability to benefit from the IDEA related service transportation, in the least restrictive environment (LRE). |

| The IEP team, including appropriate membership, should address the need to provide a more restrictive mode of transportation, under COVID-19 requirements in order to provide FAPE. (Example: Student with Autism unable to judge distance requirement for riding the regular route, now requiring a bus attendant, to be compliant with LSS policies and procedures for riding the regular bus.) |

| Note 1: Definition of IDEA Related Service Transportation. |

| Note 2: Definition of Travel Training Set. 300.309(f) |

| Travel training means providing instruction, as appropriate, to children with significant cognitive disabilities, and any other children with disabilities who require this instruction, to enable them to (i) Develop an awareness of the environment in which they live; and (ii) Learn the skills necessary to move effectively and safely from place to place within that environment (e.g., in school, in the home, at work, and in the community). |

| Recommend that a task force of highly qualified personnel is identified and assigned to communicate weekly to address transportation needs and circumstances. This committee should be chaired jointly by special education and transportation personnel. |
COVID-19 REOPENING PLAN FOR RETURNING TO WORK

Workplace Expectations and Guidelines

I. Introduction

Frederick County Public Schools (FCPS) is preparing for a full return of employees this summer and fall to ensure a successful opening of the 2020-2021 school year. Four reopening work groups have been formed to develop specific plans for reopening based on direction from Governor Hogan, local health authorities, and county officials. Such plans will evolve as updated information is received; however, such plans will be in alignment with Maryland’s Recovery Plan for Education, local orders of the Frederick County Health Department and local government, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA).

This guide is intended to provide employees with details about reopening; work responsibilities; essential contact information regarding leave, benefits, and requests for accommodations; and supports for employees during the transition.

II. FCPS Reopening Teams

Under the supervision of Dr. Alban and Cabinet, FCPS convened four work groups of key stakeholders to develop components of the reopening plan that align with guidance provided by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Each group and its charge is listed below.

1) Logistics Work Group - The charge of this work group is planning the operational procedures necessary to:
   • ensure our buildings are properly cleaned and sanitized;
   • identify any facility enhancements that need to be made;
   • identify and prepare the work spaces needed to deliver instruction;
• transport students to our schools;
• facilitate safe entry and exit from school buildings;
• provide meal service to students;
• direct how to move through the building during the day;
• develop health room protocols;
• address the process for screening students and staff if necessary; and
• address the identification of students or staff who develop COVID-19 symptoms and/or test positive for COVID-19.

2) **Instructional Work Group** - The charge of this work group is planning the operational procedures necessary to:

• schedule instruction for a limited number of the student body (based on half of students being able to attend and one-third of students being able to attend) at each level;
• devise a plan that provides consistency and comfort for students;
• eliminate or drastically limit the need to share instructional materials;
• allocate staff to support minimal movement of students through the building (when, who, why);
• explore options for flexibly grouping students to address learning loss during closure;
• support distance learning for students who are not in school on a given day;
• ensure an equitable approach to instructional delivery, allowing for supplemental support as appropriate, whether through weekly scheduling, small group size, creative use of staffing, or extended learning opportunities;
• provide a virtual school option for families who choose not to send students back to school; and
• establish professional learning opportunities or collaborative planning for staff.

3) **Special Services and Student Supports Work Group** - The charge of this work group is planning the operational procedures necessary to:

• ensure appropriate support for student receiving special services, including students with disabilities, students with 504 plans, English Learners and students receiving intervention;
• provide any additional support necessary to address the social-emotional well-being of students;
• ensure appropriate support for homeless students and students relying on home/hospital teaching;
meet the regulatory mandates for compliance with special education law, 504 requirements, and local requirements;
• coordinate special transportation options;
• establish procedures for monitoring attendance;
• coordinate the efforts of special educators, EL teachers, and general educators in supporting the instructional needs of students while in school and during distance learning; and
• establish professional learning opportunities for staff.

4) Employee Relations and Communications Work Group - The charge of this work group is planning the operational procedures necessary to:
• identify adaptations to policy, regulations, and negotiated agreements necessary to successfully implement a non-traditional operational process;
• identify screening techniques to support safety of staff and students;
• consider options to maximize the use of FCPS staff who need to recover days or require modified schedules;
• provide appropriate support and resources to employees; and
• develop effective communication strategies to keep staff and community members informed as each stage of recovery is implemented.

III. Communication

FCPS recognizes that keeping the community and our employees updated with information is of critical importance. Information is available on the following links:

• Updates about reopening for the general public can be accessed on the FCPS website: https://www.fcps.org/update

• Updates about reopening specific to FCPS employees can be accessed on InsideFCPS: https://insidefcps.fcps.org/covid

Note: This guidebook is fluid and will be updated as additional information and guidance becomes available. Updates will be provided on the InsideFCPS link as noted above and employees are encouraged to check it weekly.
IV. **Telework Guidelines**

The following link provides information as it relates to teleworking:

https://insidefcps.fcps.org/sites/default/files/FCPS_TemporaryTeleworkProgram.pdf

V. **Protocols While Working at an FCPS Building**

Employees are beginning to use FCPS buildings again more routinely, and custodial staff continue to work tirelessly to clean and disinfect buildings during each work day. The following is important information regarding best practices and protocols for working in FCPS facilities.

1) **Social Distancing and Hand Washing**

Employees should continue to be mindful of the importance of social distancing recommendations (i.e. 6 feet apart), coughing or sneezing into a tissue or the bend of the elbow, and washing hands regularly with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, employees are encouraged to use hand sanitizer covering all surfaces of their hands and rubbing them together until they feel dry.

2) **Disinfecting**

Custodians will continue to clean and disinfect buildings daily with specific emphasis placed on frequently touched surfaces (e.g. door handles, sink handles, handrails, etc.). Custodians utilize cleaning products and disinfectants that are approved by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Note: Employees should refrain from using any aerosolized cleaning products in FCPS facilities or using unapproved cleaning supplies.
3) **Personal Cleaning of Common Spaces Following Use**

While custodial staff will continue to clean common spaces in accordance with CDC guidelines, additional care should be taken to wipe down hard surfaces after each use where possible. This includes but is not limited to desks, keyboards, mouse, AV/electrical equipment, chairs, tables, etc. Supplies will be available in each location.

4) **Personal Cleaning of Work Spaces**

While custodial staff will continue to clean office and work spaces in accordance with CDC guidelines, additional care should be taken to wipe down hard surfaces after each use where possible. This includes but is not limited to desks, keyboards, mouse, AV/electrical equipment, chairs, tables, etc. Supplies will be available in each location.

5) **Shared Office Equipment**

Limit sharing any high-touch materials such as phones, pens, folders, keyboards, etc.

6) **Elevators**

Observe social distancing protocols at all times. Use tissues provided at elevators when touching the buttons.

7) **Restrooms**

Follow any maximum capacity restrictions placed on the restroom. Wash hands before and after use of the restroom.

8) **Face Coverings**

The CDC recommends that people wear a cloth face covering to cover their nose and mouth in a community setting. This is an additional public health measure people are encouraged to take to reduce the spread of COVID-19 in addition to, not instead of, social distancing, frequent hand washing, and other preventive actions.
Maryland Governor Hogan issued an executive order which requires the wearing of masks or face coverings when inside any retail establishments, including grocery stores, pharmacies, and convenience stores, or when riding any form of public transportation in Maryland. It also requires all essential retail locations to require their staff to wear masks or face coverings and requires those businesses to put appropriate social distancing measures in place in order to keep customers and their staff safe. Anytime an FCPS employee cannot ensure that he/she meets the current physical/social distancing guidelines in the course of his/her work (elevators, close proximity meetings, stairwells, hallways, common work spaces, etc.), an employee must wear a mask or face covering. In all other situations, the use of a mask or face covering is encouraged but not required.

FCPS anticipates that most staff members will desire to provide their own face covering. However, it is recognized that some employees will be unable or unwilling to provide their own. FCPS will make face coverings available to employees and students who need them. Requests for face coverings should be placed with the warehouse using normal ordering procedures. Staff are reminded that cloth face coverings should be washed routinely. The CDC provides guidance for how to wash cloth face covering at: [https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/how-to-wash-cloth-face-coverings.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/how-to-wash-cloth-face-coverings.html)

Face coverings can be a fun accessory that fits one’s personality, but please be mindful they should be appropriate for a positive learning and work environment.

9) **Meetings**

If meeting participants cannot be socially distant (i.e. 6 feet from one another), the recommended option is a video conference using one of the accepted platforms (i.e. Skype for Business, Google Meet). Otherwise, meetings held in a conference room or other meeting room will be designated with the maximum allowable occupants to maintain social distancing. When scheduling the use of a meeting room, consider the occupancy limitations.
VI. FAQs for Employees - Returning to Work

1) Do I have to come in?
If your supervisor has determined your presence is needed to fulfill your duties on site, then “yes” it is an expectation that you come to work. However, other work options may be considered if a medical reason is presented that qualifies for an accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). If a full return-to-work approach is not needed, you and your supervisor may discuss a hybrid schedule which may include a combination of telework, virtual meetings, and staggered in-office days.

2) How do I know it’s safe to return to work?
The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) requires employers to provide a work environment “free from recognized hazards that are causing or are likely to cause death or physical harm,” and FCPS takes this responsibility seriously. FCPS has worked closely with the Frederick County Health Department, in conjunction with other reliable resources such as the Maryland State Department of Education, the Governor’s Office, the Maryland Department of Health, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), regarding COVID-19 in an effort to develop and implement comprehensive strategies for keeping employees and other stakeholders safe. For example, FCPS has instituted expectations for social distancing, regular hand washing, coughing/sneezing into the elbow, wearing a mask/face covering, and staying home when sick, as well as enhanced efforts taken to clean and disinfect work spaces and common areas.

3) How are employees screened before entering an FCPS building?
At this time, temperature checks will not be instituted with employees. However, by swiping your FCPS badge when entering a work location you are affirming the following:
   a) You have not in the last 7 days had any close (less than 6 feet), prolonged contact (more than 2-3 minutes) with anyone who is either confirmed or suspected of being infected with COVID-19, including anyone who was experiencing or displaying any of the known symptoms of COVID-19 (which are listed in item ‘b’ below); AND
   b) You do not currently experience or display, and you have not in the last 7 days experienced or displayed, any of the following symptoms:
• Elevated temperature (100.5 or higher) or fever,
• Cough or sore throat,
• Shortness of breath and/or difficulty breathing,
• Loss of smell and/or taste,
• Fatigue, muscle aches, chills, shaking, or
• Any other flu-like symptoms.

4) **Why return to work now?**

Returning to work is in keeping with Phase 2 of Governor Hogan’s *Maryland Strong: Roadmap to Recovery* plan and has been deemed essential in meeting the responsibility of operating the school system effectively and successfully to prepare for the upcoming school year.

5) **Can I continue to telework if I prefer that option?**

With an exception of an accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), telework is not a guaranteed option for an employee; rather it is an option evaluated between the employee and his/her supervisor.

6) **What happens if I return to work and I get sick with COVID-19? Will I be paid? What if my family member gets sick with COVID-19 and needs care? What if I live with someone who is elderly or has a compromised health condition?**

Sarah Minnick and Donna Clabaugh in the Human Resources Benefits Office are ready to assist employees with these types of questions as they relate to rights afforded under the law. Employee benefits information addressing these types of questions can be found at: [https://www.fcps.org/benefits](https://www.fcps.org/benefits)

7) **If a co-worker tests positive for COVID-19, will I be told?**

The Frederick County Health Department is responsible for conducting contact tracing in the county and in coordination with the Maryland Department of Health. If someone tests positive for COVID-19, they will be contacted by a public health worker to get more information about where they have been and who they have been with. The contact tracer will contact these exposed individuals (contacts) of their potential exposure as rapidly and sensitively as possible.
If an employee undergoing testing was symptomatic while working (fever, cough, difficulty breathing) and notifies FCPS, a supervisor will advise co-workers who have had close contact with the individual within 72 hours of onset of the individual’s symptoms to self-monitor for symptoms and to self-isolate until results are known. (Note: As of April 4, 2020, “close contact” is described as being within 6 feet for 10-30 minutes; if contact was outdoors, the risk is lower) Confidentiality is required under the ADA, so the identity of the employee cannot be provided.

If an employee is confirmed to have COVID-19 infection and notifies FCPS, other employees who have had recent contact (within 72 hours of the onset of symptoms) with that individual will be notified by the supervisor of the possible exposure in the workplace. Again, confidentiality is required under the ADA, so the identity of the employee cannot be provided.

If an employee has to self-isolate, telework options may be available and will be determined between the employee and his/her supervisor.

Note: Supervisors will notify Jenifer Waters, Health Services Specialist, who serves as the FCPS point of contact with the Frederick County Health Department.

8) Do I have to wear a mask/face covering?

Yes, under certain conditions. Anytime an FCPS employee cannot ensure that he/she meets the current physical/social distancing guidelines in the course of his/her work (elevators, close proximity meetings, stairwells, hallways, common work spaces, etc.), an employee is expected to wear a mask or face covering. In all other situations, the use of a mask or face covering is encouraged but not required. 1

1 According to the Maryland Department of Health, cloth face coverings can be made from household items and include wearing a scarf or bandana that covers the nose and mouth. Cloth face coverings should not be worn by young children under age 2, by anyone who has trouble breathing, or is unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the face covering without assistance. People with disabilities who are unable to wear cloth face coverings are provided reasonable accommodations per the ADA. The cloth face coverings recommended are not surgical masks or N-95 respirators. Those are critical supplies that must continue to be reserved for healthcare workers and other medical first responders, as recommended by current CDC guidance.
9) **Can my supervisor send me home if he/she thinks I am sick with COVID-19 related symptoms?**

Yes. According to guidance provided by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), an employer has the right to send an employee with COVID-19 or one who is showing symptoms associated with the virus home. If this occurs, contact the Human Resources Benefits Office immediately so follow up can occur regarding proper leave designation. CDC indicates the possible symptoms of COVID-19, which can include the following: cough, fever, chills, muscle pain, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, sore throat, or new loss of taste or smell.

10) **Can I choose to stay home based on feeling unsafe?**

Unless you have been granted an ADA accommodation related to COVID-19, you are expected to physically return to work as operational needs of the school system require. You are encouraged to talk with your supervisor about your concerns to determine what supports may be available.

11) **What resources are available to help me deal with stress and anxiety about returning to the workplace?**

FCPS partners with INOVA, a non-profit healthcare provider, to provide employees and their household members with a free, confidential Employee Assistance Program (EAP) benefit. EAP offers assistance with personal or professional problems that may interfere with work or family responsibilities. In response to COVID-19, INOVA is offering online and telephonic resources to help employees and their families to cope with stress associated with the virus. Information regarding how to access EAP can be found on the Human Resources website. [https://www.fcps.org/benefits/employee-assistance-program](https://www.fcps.org/benefits/employee-assistance-program)

*If you have questions about information in this guidebook, or suggestions to include additional information for FCPS employees, you may email the Ombuds at Ombuds@fcps.org who will check the email weekly and provide feedback to the reopening committee.*
APPENDIX (Summary of Updates)

July 6, 2020 - clarified that FCPS will make face coverings available to employees and students who need them (Section V, 8)

July 23, 2020 - updated information about meetings (Section V, 9)
In the fall of the 2020-2021 school year, Frederick County Public Schools (FCPS) will open in a virtual learning model. In the virtual learning model, FCPS remains committed to teaching, supporting, and guiding its students. Specifically, in the fall semester, FCPS aims to:

► Establish daily routines and schedules;
► Provide rigorous, personalized, and meaningful instruction on a daily basis to all students;
► Address learning loss and unique needs of learners;
► Introduce new learning tools and technology;
► Devote staff and resources to the social-emotional well-being of students;
► Seek avenues to foster educator-student relationships;
► Provide parents with support and guidance for virtual learning environment, and
► Ensure equitable access for all students.

Purpose of Evaluation

An evaluation of the virtual learning model helps FCPS determine its strengths and weaknesses and the effectiveness of the virtual learning model while ultimately leading to identification of strategies for systemic and school improvement. As part of the evaluation, FCPS staff will not only look at processes (i.e., determine whether implementation of the model is going as planned) but outcomes.

Evaluation questions guide the methods and tools used to collect evaluation data. The following evaluation questions are preliminary and will be vetted and refined prior to the start of the school year with key program stakeholders.

Process Evaluation Questions:

► To what extent is the virtual learning model being implemented as planned?
► To what extent did the learning model reach all students? Do all students have access to the necessary tools and resources? Are all students participating in the virtual learning model?
► What support and guidance are needed by parents?
► What structural and process aspects of the model have facilitated progress towards high-quality teaching and student learning?

Outcome Evaluation Questions:

► Do teachers feel more prepared to teach in a virtual learning environment? To what extent did teachers acquire the intended knowledge and skills to effectively use technology to facilitate instruction?
► How has synchronous learning facilitated student engagement?
► What impact did virtual learning have on students’ academic achievement? Are students meeting/exceeding academic expectations and/or standards in core content areas?
► What impact has virtual learning had on overall climate? How satisfied are students, staff, and families?
► To what extent has virtual learning influenced students’ emotional well-being?

Methods and Procedures

Using multiple data sources, both quantitative and qualitative data will be collected on various aspects of the virtual learning model. Data collection strategies and sources are described below.

Stakeholder Surveys

Surveys will be developed and administered to stakeholder groups—staff, students, and families. For staff and students, not only will the surveys aim to gather perceptions on various topics related to a virtual learning environment (e.g., this may include climate and equity, engagement, grit/mindset, expectations, feedback, areas of need, etc.), but each survey will seek to measure social-emotional learning (SEL) (students) (e.g.,
mindset, self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, responsible decision-making, etc.) or teaching SEL skills (teachers) in a virtual learning environment. The family survey will gather parents/guardians’ perceptions on their experience with their child participating in the virtual learning model (e.g., expectations, time spent, feedback/communication, etc.) as well as items related to communication and family-school partnerships in a virtual learning environment.

Items from prior Continuity of Learning surveys and/or reflection activities may be adapted for use. Surveys will be vetted by various FCPS central-based and school-based staff prior to finalization and administration. Results from the surveys will be used to help monitor implementation progress and inform decisions related to systemic and school improvements. Survey administration is tentatively being planned for late October or early November 2020.

**Informal Discussions/Focus Groups**

Informal discussions and/or focus groups with staff and students are proposed to help gather information on implementation (e.g., progress updates, successes, barriers, best practices, lessons learned, etc.). While surveys are appropriate for collecting information about people’s attributes and attitudes, informal discussion and/or focus groups allow for in-depth probing and help provide a deeper understanding of experiences through the use of guided questions. All discussions and/or focus groups would be conducted virtually. Evaluation staff in the System Accountability and School Administration (SASA) department will work with school staff in helping to facilitate any focus groups that are conducted.

**Student Achievement Data**

To ensure that students are making progress towards meeting/exceeding expectations, collection and reporting of student achievement data are important. Multiple performance indicators will be collected, analyzed, and may be used for reporting progress. These include but are not limited to:

- **Student attendance.** Daily attendance will be taken regardless of the learning model and/or recovery stage that FCPS reopens in. Procedures for taking daily attendance were not finalized at the time of this writing. However, various activities that will be considered and/or monitored may include completion of assigned classwork during or outside traditional school hours, completion of Schoology coursework, participation/engagement in school activities, and/or participation in virtual meetings with a teacher or service provider.

- **Local assessment.** Within the virtual learning model, local assessments will be administered to students in English language arts (ELA) and math in PreK through Grade 8. Depending on grade, assessments will occur at the beginning- (BOY), middle- (MOY), and/or end-of-the-year (EOY).
  - For primary grades, foundational skills (ELA) and benchmark assessments (math) will occur within the synchronous support sessions.
  - Performance Series (PS) will serve as the primary assessment for reading and math in Grades 2-8. DIBELS will be administered for ELA to students in kindergarten through Grade 2.
  - For high school, the only census local assessment is PS Reading and Math for Grades 9-10.
  - Formative assessment options and related tools are also available to teachers to gather evidence of student learning or progress, whether content specific benchmarks or tools available through Schoology.

  **Note:** Schools will be able to monitor students’ progress as local assessment results will be available in Performance Matters as well as a systemic data reporting tool, RADAR, approximately five days after the assessment window closes.

- **State assessment.** In the event that data from state assessments are available for grade 3-12 students in the 2020-2021 school year, whether Maryland Comprehensive Assessment Program (MCAP), Maryland Integrated Science Assessment (MISA) for Grades 5 and 8, and/or WIDA ACCESS for English Learners—FCPS will analyze the data to measure progress towards meeting/exceeding proficiencies in assessment-related content areas and measure student performance related to meeting standards. Focusing on measuring proficiency and individual growth is important when gaps in assessments are evident and therefore should not be used to measure trends (i.e., growth over time).
Note: State assessment data have historically been lagged and therefore are not available for evaluation purposes in the same school year. In this event, only local assessment data would be available for analysis.

► **Other local/state performance indicators.** Local performance measures that may be examined as indicators include grading, advanced academic coursework participation/scores, honor roll, on-track in 9th grade for graduation, and graduation status.

Note: Grading for virtual coursework will follow FCPS Regulation 500-06.

While example measures for student achievement have been provided above, it is important to note that FCPS may further identify and/or refine academic metrics for analysis.

**Teacher Observation Data – Synchronous Learning Sessions**

Students will participate in classes via synchronous sessions (i.e., Google Meet) led by teachers in the fall of the 2020-2021 school year. FCPS leaders will work with school-based administrators on identifying and collecting observational data from synchronous learning. The data will be used to support teacher learning and development as teachers are learning to navigate digital learning for students.

**Small Group Face-to-Face Instruction**

In the event that FCPS convenes targeted small groups of students to participate in face-to-face instruction to support individualized education needs, additional evaluation efforts to monitor student progress in these small group settings will be determined. This may include administration of specific survey items related to the small group instruction, conducting small focus groups, and/or conducting a matched-pair analysis, depending on n size (i.e., comparison group = students of similar characteristics not attending small group instruction).

**Data Analysis**

Data will be compiled, aggregated, and analyzed in order to answer programmatic questions systemically and at the school level. Descriptive analysis will focus on the implementation of the virtual model—what was implemented and how it was implemented—emphasizing challenges, successes, strategies, etc. Content analysis will be conducted on qualitative data collected via surveys, informal discussions, and/or focus groups.

**Use of Results**

Results from the evaluation will be used to:

► Support continuous school and student performance monitoring and improvement.
► Support teacher professional learning and growth opportunities.
► Enhance understanding of student learning in a virtual learning model.
► Identify lessons learned and best practices for either improvement efforts or mid-course programmatic changes.