



REOPENING SCHOOLS PLAN

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Introduction to the Reopening Schools Plan

On June 9, Governor Northam announced a phased reopening for Virginia public schools. This plan outlined guidance on instructional and service delivery for the 2020-21 school year. This document is intended to communicate specific components of Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) plans and preparations for reopening schools in fall 2020. Based on lessons learned from spring 2020, review of state guidance, and reflection on stakeholder input, FCPS has refined its approach to flexible educational delivery. Expanded options reflect the needs and concerns of families and staff while maintaining priorities for health, safety, robust instruction, and support services

Reopening Schools Task Force

Following the May 11 Fairfax County School Board work session, where the Board considered initial fall reopening challenges, the superintendent and deputy established a new task force structure to prioritize and expedite information-gathering and development of recommendations for reopening school. The task force is charged with developing specific action plans to address two reopening models: full-time online instruction and an in-person instruction continuum with social distancing in FCPS schools.

Task force membership reflects diverse perspectives to actively involve stakeholders in the planning process. The following perspectives ensure a range of community, staff, and student needs are considered as plans are established:

Staff representing classroom teachers and FCPS professional organizations, including Fairfax County Federation of Teachers, Fairfax Education Association, Association of Fairfax Professional Educators, and Support Services Employees' Advisory Council;

Student representatives;

Parent representatives from Fairfax County Council of Parent Teacher Associations, Special Education Parent Teacher Association, Parents of Autistic Children, and Title I Parent Advisory Council;

Members of the Fairfax County School Board;

Representatives from School Board advisory groups, including Minority Student Achievement Oversight Committee and Advisory Council for students with Disabilities;

Staff from the Fairfax County Health Department;

Department staff from communications and community relations, facilities and transportation services, financial services, human resources, information technology, instructional services, professional learning and family engagement, school support, special services; and

Region and school leadership, including principal representatives from each level.

The task force was formed to address six key action areas: Facilities and School Operations, Instruction, Technology, Communication, Community Partnerships, and Human Resources. The superintendent and deputy assigned division leaders to oversee the work of each of these action teams. Action teams meet regularly and include additional members who bring direct knowledge and skills for identifying specific issues and generating a plan to address each of the identified critical actions.

Guiding Principles for Reopening

FCPS has identified five principles to guide all planning for school reopening.

1. Ensure safe learning and working environments for students and staff.
2. Provide family choice in student learning format, offering two options for instruction:
 - a. Full-time online instruction for the year;
 - or
 - b. In-person instruction continuum delivered flexibly throughout the year based on changes in public health data.
3. Ensure all students receive instruction that meets state and federal standards and have the necessary supports for success, including:
 - a. Access to technology and connectivity;
 - b. Social-emotional wellness and health supports; and
 - c. Additional supports to meet needs of special populations.
4. Provide training, time, support, and flexibility necessary for staff to prepare for successful reopening.
5. Provide proactive, clear communication (with translations) to all families and staff.

FCPS Operational Approach

With the uncertain future of COVID-19 in our region, FCPS continues to actively plan and prepare for a range of scenarios and challenges that are likely to face our community as schools resume instruction in the fall. The FCPS Reopening Schools Plan lays out the core elements of these plans and preparations as of each publication date. It is expected that plans will continue to be adjusted and further developed throughout the summer and fall.

Full-Time Educational Program

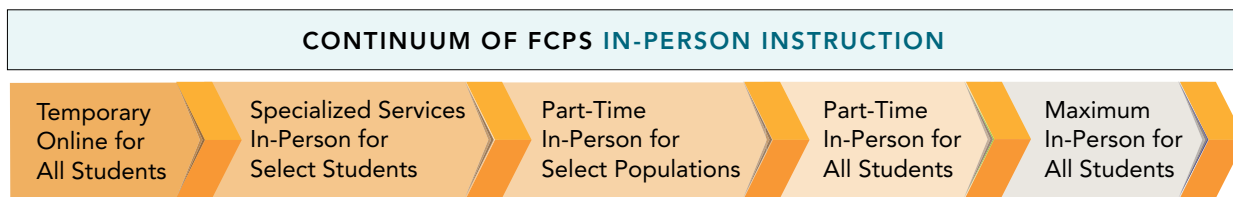
At the foundation of the FCPS plan for reopening is a commitment to ensuring access to a full-time educational program for all students. Each of the operational models shares a 5-day instructional week, as illustrated in the table.

GENERAL FCPS DELIVERY MODEL FOR 2020-21	
5- DAY Instructional Week	Monday: Independent (asynchronous) learning for all, plus supplemental specialized morning instruction for identified students; office hours, related services, assessments, and extracurricular activities may also be offered for students
	Tuesday-Friday: Two to four days weekly of teacher-directed interactive (synchronous) instruction, with the number of interactive days defined by choices and conditions outlined below

Dialing In and Dialing Out

At the heart of the FCPS in-person option is a careful balance between a commitment to health safety for students and staff and a belief that in-person instruction is able to support students academic, social-emotional, mental health, and behavioral development in ways that cannot be replicated through online-only interactions. In this time with coronavirus present in our environment, any in-person interactions carry a degree of risk. FCPS staff, in collaboration with the Fairfax County Health Department, have developed and continue to refine comprehensive strategies to mitigate health risk. While these mitigation strategies are essential, they also introduce new operational and logistical challenges that FCPS has never before faced.

Throughout 2020-21, division leaders will face the persistent question of finding the right level of in-person services that can be safely offered for families electing this option. The in-person instruction continuum option is designed to allow the level of in-person service to dial in and dial out at different points in the year based on the current health conditions and trends. *Note that final decisions about the number of levels in the continuum, level names, and level definitions will be finalized by the start of the school year.*



When dialing in on the continuum, opportunities for in-person instruction will begin with the most vulnerable students, such as English learners, students with disabilities, and primary grade students. The chapter on the in-person instruction continuum provides additional details about instructional delivery at each level of the continuum, including relevant schedule and safety information. Note that the continuum applies only to students whose families select the in-person instructional model for the school year. Students whose families elect full-time online instruction can expect consistent full-time online instruction for the entire school year.

FCPS Operational Approach (Continued)

Virtual Launch for All

The FCPS School Board and superintendent made two important decisions in July that affect reopening plans.

The first day of the school year was postponed until September 8, 2020. This will allow additional time for scheduling student classes, hiring teachers to fill vacancies created by resignations and leave requests, providing professional development and training to all staff, and distributing technology devices to families.



FCPS will open the school year with virtual learning for all. This change means online instruction not only for students whose families selected the full-time online option but also on a temporary basis for students whose families elected in-person instruction with social distancing in schools.

With these decisions, instruction for all students is delayed two weeks, and students whose families selected in-person instruction will begin the year at the most restrictive level of the delivery continuum. This is a substantial shift from prior plans to begin with two days per week of in-person services for all students, a substantially less restrictive level of the continuum.

Under the most restrictive “temporary online for all” continuum level, class schedules mirror those used for students participating full-time online for the year. Online practices reflect lessons learned from spring 2020 and include expanded digital curriculum resources, as well as additional staff training. The division’s ongoing expansion of technology, connectivity, and blended learning strategies across grade levels and curricular areas will ensure FCPS students are able to access high-quality, rigorous instruction in this temporary model and across all levels of the continuum throughout the year. FCPS will provide additional professional development for staff and resources for families to prepare for a successful start to the school year under a model of virtual learning for all.

Family Choices

Within this general 5-day FCPS model, families have a choice between two options to meet their children’s educational needs. This choice will become active for families as the division begins offering in-person instruction with social distancing in FCPS school buildings.

COMPARISON OF FAMILY CHOICES FOR 2020-21		
OPTION	 FULL-TIME ONLINE INSTRUCTION	 IN-PERSON INSTRUCTION CONTINUUM
GOAL	Provides families with a stable, quality online program for the full year	Safely maximizes in-person instructional time with social distancing in FCPS buildings
DESCRIPTION	Guarantee of full-time online instruction for the entire school year	Flexible design allows for changes to schedule and service delivery throughout the year in response to current public health data. Services may range from temporary full-time online in the worst case to up to four days per week of in-person learning at school in the very best future case.
KEY BENEFIT	Families will know what to expect for scheduling and routings for the full year	Students will be afforded the greatest level of in-person interactions with staff and peers that may be safety managed at any time
KEY DRAWBACK	Provides families with a stable, quality online program for the full year	Families will need to be prepared for schedules and routines will vary throughout the year based on changing health data.

Preparing for Future Closures

Changes in public health data could necessitate rapid adjustments to the level of in-person instruction that can be offered at any time in 2020-21. Students, families, and staff who are participating under the in-person instruction continuum option should recognize the potential of short-term closure for a classroom, school, or the division at any time. Based on the experience in spring 2020 and the continuum design of the 2020-21 in-person instruction model, FCPS is prepared to rapidly adjust the continuum level, as needed, to respond to specific cases of infection and exposure within a particular class or school as well as broader community health trends for the county and region to inform decisions about overall division operations. Division leaders will communicate promptly to staff, students, and families in the event that local health conditions warrant school closure or a change in instructional delivery.

FCPS is in the process of defining specific multi-faceted metrics and thresholds to determine when the division can safely provide in-person instruction. These metrics will inform decisions on dialing in or dialing out on the instructional continuum at the division level and for individual schools and classrooms, as needed. Metrics will include three levels of context for decisions: community transmission and disease trends, system operational data, and school-level data, as follows.

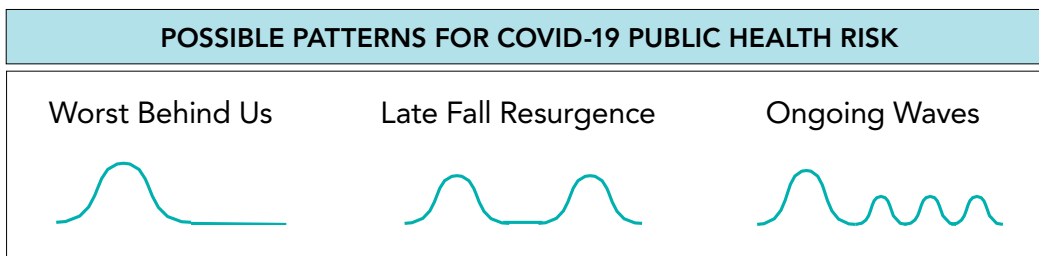
Community Transmission and Disease Trends: Defined by Virginia Department of Health (VDH), reviewed weekly with the Fairfax County Health Department, and used to determine if the level of community transmission will allow for face-to-face instruction.

System Operational Metrics: FCPS capacity to support face-to-face instruction and used to define continuum level for school operations. These metrics include the level availability of staffing, personal protective equipment, and cleaning supplies.

School Metrics: Responsive analysis to maintain health and safety, used in the event of confirmed cases of COVID-19 to determine the need for a shift to temporary online for all at the individual classroom, cohort, or school level.

During a health closure for one or more FCPS sites, no students would be allowed in school buildings for instruction. Staff would access buildings for critical purposes, as permitted within health department guidelines. In rare circumstances when a necessary specialized service cannot be provided remotely, individual students may be permitted into a FCPS facility by appointment and with strict mitigation strategies in place.

Experts studying health trends for COVID-19 and past pandemics recognize that there is the potential for a range of shifts in public health risk as we move toward eventual stability. As we begin to ease social distancing, we work from an assumption that the worst is behind us. However, analysis of historical data and trends from other areas of the world experiencing COVID-19 suggest the likelihood that we will see a resurgence in cases. This resurgence could take the form of a spike, possibly in late fall when flu season also prompts more COVID-19 transmissions. Another variation could bring recurring waves across many months until a vaccine is developed, reflecting loss of stamina for strict health and social distancing precautions.



Source: EAB Interviews and Analysis

Lessons Learned From Spring 2020

The impact of the school closures on student achievement and well-being has been studied by various organizations around the world. Building a reopening plan that takes into account common lessons learned within FCPS and beyond will help create an infrastructure aligned to student, family, and staff needs. Documenting the successes and missteps in the [spring 2020 distance learning](#) implementation will inform decisions and planning for the reopening of schools in the fall 2020. Six key areas of learning have been documented by FCPS staff from analysis of our own experiences and review of recent articles and studies.

Instructional Model

Consistent implementation of a divisionwide instructional schedule is needed to promote equity.

More synchronous student learning (live, interactive learning) is preferred. Increased access to live teaching experiences is needed to reduce the family burden to support student learning.

Increased social emotional learning (SEL) opportunities are needed in a virtual environment.

Equity Concerns

Technology and connectivity must be provided by the division to ensure that all students can participate equitably in online instruction.

Division plans must account for the disproportionate health and economic impact of COVID-19 on certain communities, including how this affects students' ability to equitably participate in online learning, potentially widening achievement gaps.

Communication

Opportunities for two-way conversations with all stakeholders is vitally important when generating plans and monitoring implementation.

Frequent and consistent messaging from the school division are needed, with safeguards to ensure communication reaches all families.

Verbal interpretations and written translations must be available for all families who require them.

Return to school success stories should be shared with stakeholders through social media, newsletters, news releases, and media outlets.

Instructional Practices

Staff need dedicated time to plan and work in collaborative teams.

Ongoing professional development is needed to strengthen virtual teaching strategies.

Digital citizenship concepts and skills should be integrated into lessons.

Consistent inclusion of "specials" classes in elementary school and electives in middle schools is needed to support the whole child.

Grading policies should be carefully crafted to appropriately motivate student engagement.

Technology and Infrastructure

Timely distribution of laptops and MiFi devices must be further strengthened to support student access to online instruction.

Learning platforms and video conferencing must be able to support consistent access by FCPS students and staff.

Students must have secure ways to access synchronous learning.

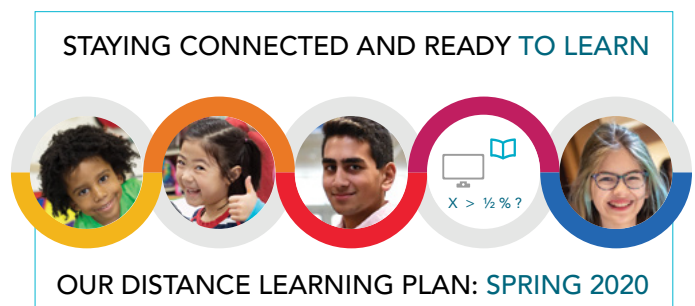
Honoring students' individuality while maintaining security is critical, such as by reflecting preferred names within digital platforms.

Staff Support

Staff access to childcare is needed to meet the demands of virtual instruction and telework.

Administrators, teachers, and support staff should receive sustained professional development on a range of crisis-related issues, self-care, and productivity tools.

The division must ensure that all staff have consistent access to internet connectivity so they may effectively support students, families, and the school system.



State Guidance on Reopening Schools

Governor Northam's *Phase Guidance for Virginia Schools* was accompanied by comprehensive guidance from the Virginia Department of Education, *Recovery, Redesign, Restart 2020*. The state guidance reinforces that Virginia schools are expected to deliver new instruction to all students in the 2020-21 school year, while recognizing that the format for instructional delivery may shift across the year. The state plan articulates that the start of the year is likely to bring a blend of in-person and remote learning across the state. However, it recognizes that divisions in different areas of the state may have differing needs and may be on different timelines with delivery models. All state decisions related to easing health restrictions will continue to be governed by public health status data, as outlined in the *Forward Virginia Blueprint*.

The governor's phase guidance provides a gradual scale-up of school operations. Mitigation strategies including physical distancing, enhanced cleaning, health screening protocols, etc., are necessary across all phases to reduce the spread of COVID-19 virus. Based on local health data, divisions are authorized to be more restrictive for in-person services than what is allowed in each phase.

Phase I: In-person services may be provided under strict safety protocols for special education programs, in special cases where all parties agree it is appropriate. Childcare may be offered in schools for working adults under special restrictions. During this phase, instruction is generally remote. No athletics or extracurricular activities are permitted. Social distancing guidelines are defined as:

- Maximum 10 people per bus or classroom and 6-foot physical separation, whenever possible; and
- Limited mixing of students in groups, no communal spaces, such as cafeterias, and no large gatherings.

Phase II: In-person services may additionally be offered for PreK-3 and English learners. Summer camps may be held in school buildings with strict social distancing measures in place. During this phase, instruction remains predominantly remote. Limited access to athletics and extracurricular activities with mitigation strategies. Social distancing guidelines are defined as:

- 6-foot physical separation, whenever possible, and physical distance between children on school buses;
- 50 person limit on large gatherings, assemblies, etc., and limited mixing of students in groups; and
- Communal spaces remain closed, if possible, or receive intensive disinfection between uses.

Phase III: In-person services are permitted for all students with social distancing measures in place. During this phase, in-person instruction may be offered to all students, but remote instruction will continue to be an option for some learners. Athletics and extracurricular activities may be expanded with continued mitigation strategies. Social distancing guidelines are defined as:

- Goal of 6-foot physical separation for all adults and students, with the option of combining 3-foot separation and cloth face coverings as an alternative;
- Physical distance on school buses; use of face coverings when physical distance cannot be maintained;
- 10-foot physical distancing for school athletics practice and competitions;
- Large school gatherings, including athletic events, limited to the lesser of 250 people or 50 percent of venue; and
- Considerations to limit mixing of students in groups, including adjusted schedules, transitions, closure or staggered use for communal spaces, etc.

Beyond Phase III: Divisions begin a "new normal" in operations in consultation with public health officials. Some mitigating strategies will remain in place, such as those outlined as applying across all phases.

Across All Phases: Divisions are expected to follow CDC guidance for schools pertaining to social and physical distancing, health and hygiene, cleaning and disinfecting. These include:

- Daily health screenings for students and staff;
- Online instruction and teleworking options for students and staff with elevated risk of severe illness;
- Cloth face coverings for staff and encouraged for students, as developmentally appropriate, whenever 6-foot physical distancing cannot be maintained; and
- Encouraging staff and students who feel sick to stay home, with clear policies on when they can return.

Before entering Phase II or Phase III, divisions must submit a plan to the Virginia Department of Education outlining strategies to mitigate public health risk for COVID-19 and address CDC and Virginia Department of Health (VDH) recommendations. FCPS submitted documentation of its health mitigation plans on June 19 and July 31, 2020.

Health Mitigation Strategies

Virginia's reopening plans are based on CDC guidelines for ensuring safe and healthy learning and working environments. FCPS is actively collaborating with the Fairfax County Health Department (FCHD) to determine criteria and guidelines for school operations in 2020-21. Together, staff have established a joint school and health department [COVID-19 response plan](#) covering FCPS and Falls Church City Public Schools. The general health and safety protocols outlined below for students and employees are further detailed in the following resources:

- [Return to Work Guide](#) for FCPS employees in schools and central offices
- [Student Health and Safety Guidance](#) for school-based staff

Preparation and Monitoring Actions

All decisions about how schools reopen—as well as decisions about any future closures—are informed by the most recent local health data in partnership with the FCHD. The FCHD point of contact for direct contact for FCPS is Joanna Hemmat, Assistant Director, Health Services (703-267-3511). At each school, the principal serves as the point person for COVID-19 issues and inquiries. The principal's contact information is available on the FCPS [schools and centers webpage](#).

Protecting Vulnerable Individuals

The CDC has defined certain students and staff who [need extra precautions](#) against infection. As prescribed in the governor's phase guidance, FCPS will provide a full-time online option for students and teachers. This option is available for students and teachers who need extra precautions due to medical risk and others who are concerned about potential risk. Flexible telework assignments are available for non-teaching staff, including those with higher health risk. The screening, health, and safety measures that follow will offer further precautions for vulnerable students and staff.

Health Screening

FCPS will implement [daily health screening practices](#) for students, staff, and visitors. FCPS is partnering with the FCHD to develop and refine protocols for daily screening, reporting, and monitoring for 2020-21. A public information campaign will be utilized to reinforce the importance of staying home for any individual who is sick. Staff will be required to complete daily self-reporting to verify they are asymptomatic when reporting to the worksite. Public health assistants will screen students that report symptoms upon arrival or whose caregiver did not complete the daily health screening.

Responding to Illness

FCPS and FCHD have developed protocols for students and staff. Each case is handled individually, applying established FCHD protocols for communicable disease and contact tracing, including expectations for communicating to families about occurrences within a school community. When a student is found to be symptomatic during the school day, they will be moved to an isolation room for monitoring until they can be safely transported for testing and treatment.

Student and Community Health Monitoring

At an individual student level, FCPS will actively monitor absences for both in-person and online instruction. Absences reported to be due to personal or family COVID-19 infection will assist schools in providing appropriate resources and support for the student and family during the absence and in supporting a smooth transition back to instruction when it is safe for the student to return.

At a community level, FCPS will regularly communicate and monitor developments with local health department authorities regarding cases, exposures, hospitalizations, and any other relevant metrics that may require a change in school operations. In the event of an elevated number of cases in local health data or in the event of presumed or confirmed cases directly impacting schools or central offices, FCPS will consult with FCHD authorities for all decisions about short-term closure of a classroom, school, or the division as a whole.

Health Mitigation Strategies (Continued)

Closure Decisions

Decisions about closure of a classroom or school are made on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the number of impacted individuals, extent of social distancing in place while infectious individuals were present, extent of interactions and exposure within the space, and potential risk to others in and outside of the class or school. When contact tracing indicates a significant risk with the identified classroom or school, division leaders will transition all affected students to the “temporary online for all” level on the in-person delivery continuum. No specific metrics are defined for these closure decisions, as leaders must weigh the nuances of each situation using the outlined criteria and make the best judgment for the safety of the school community.

Decisions about closure of the division as a whole are made in consultation with the FCHD based on current local, regional, state, and national public health data trends. No specific metric levels are defined for these decisions, at this time. However, the VDH is in the process of developing a new monitoring tool intended to assist local officials in making data-based decisions about operations in their communities. Once available, FCPS intends to identify key health metrics that will guide future decisions about dialing in and dialing out on the in-person delivery continuum.

See the chapter on preparing for future closures for additional information on the multi-faceted metrics, thresholds, and process used for closure decisions at all levels.

Measures to Reduce Virus Spread

The CDC has highlighted specific mitigating strategies to reduce risk of COVID-19 infection and transmission.

Hygiene Practices

Routine **healthy hygiene** practices are a foundational measure to protect against COVID-19 and other illnesses. FCPS hand washing guidelines indicate that students should wash hands for at least 20 seconds after blowing their nose, coughing, or sneezing; before eating, and upon entering classrooms. Breaks will be provided for hand washing. If soap and water are not readily available, sanitizer that contains at least 60 percent alcohol will be provided. FCPS will supply hand sanitizer and disinfectant for use by students and staff.

Face Coverings and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

All staff, visitors, and students over age two will wear face coverings while inside FCPS facilities and while using FCPS-provided transportation. Face coverings may be cloth or disposable and will be provided for individuals who are unable to provide their own. Exceptions to this requirement include:

- While individuals are eating, drinking, or exercising;

- When under the supervision of a school staff official who directs the covering to be removed; and

- Individuals with a health condition, a communication or impairment, or disability that prevents them from wearing a face covering.

Additional protective equipment including face shields, gloves, and gowns will be provided, as appropriate, for settings that require close human contact, such as for staff providing certain supports for students with disabilities. Plexi-glass shields have been mounted in main offices and reception areas of schools and central offices.

Physical Distancing

FCPS staff will employ **social distancing** strategies to increase spacing between individuals, including adjusted seating arrangements for school buses and classrooms and posted signs to remind staff and students of 6-foot social distancing. A 3-foot VDH protocol combined with required face covering is applied as a back-up when 6-foot distancing is not possible for a particular space. Staff will maintain small groups by having students eat meals in classrooms whenever possible and limiting volunteers and visitors in the building.

Additionally, staff will use strategies to minimize mixing between groups whenever possible. Specific practices will be customized for each school and may include designating building entrances by grade level, mapping traffic patterns through the school, and scheduling student and staff groupings to be as static as possible.

Health Mitigation Strategies (Continued)

Ongoing Healthy Operations

Additional ongoing steps are necessary to maintain optimal health environments and operations throughout the year.

Cleaning and Disinfection

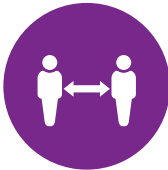
Cleaning and disinfection measures will ensure the physical spaces, equipment, and materials students and staff come into contact with remain safe. Daily sanitizing will be implemented for high touch areas (doorknobs, handles, fixtures, etc.) with a medical grade sanitizing solution. Restrooms will be monitored and cleaned more frequently throughout the day. Outside cleaning services will be contracted, as needed.

Air and Water Quality

FCPS buildings are ventilated with outdoor air throughout the day to reduce the buildup of pollutants and odors. To mitigate air and water quality issues, staff will conduct enhanced preventative maintenance on all mechanical, electrical, HVAC, and plumbing systems, including replacement of air filters. Additionally, staff will conduct enhanced building checks prior to reopening buildings to identify areas of concern and use high efficiency particulate air (HEPA) fan and filtration systems to enhance air cleaning in areas identified as concern. Staff will continue to monitor water quality at FCPS facilities to ensure systems are safe to use after any prolonged building closure, including scheduled closures such as summer and unscheduled closures such as those prompted by pandemic.

Field Trips and Visitors

All travel for FCPS students is prohibited for school year 2020-21. This includes routine, unusual, and international field trips. All incoming and outgoing short-term visitations are also prohibited for 2020-21. Volunteer access to facilities will be limited, and all visitors will be required to complete the daily health screening questionnaire.



Elements Present Across Operational Models

Some elements will support continuity of learning across FCPS for students instructed under all operational models.

Technology and Connectivity

In May, the School Board approved expanding the FCPSOn initiative to include all middle schools. This expansion is on top of current implementation at all high schools and means that every FCPS student in grades 7-12 will have access to a personally assigned FCPS-provided laptop for use at home and at school. New and redeployed laptops will also be available for elementary school students in grades PreK-6, as needed. With these enhancements, all students in PreK-12 will be provided with laptop computers, as needed, to support learning in-person and online. Additionally, the division has purchased additional MiFi devices for distribution to families, when reliable home internet access is not available.

With guidance and support from the Superintendent's Technology Advisory Council, FCPS is reviewing video-conference contracts and service level agreements. Priority is to ensure reliable vendor performance and a safe and secure virtual learning platform to support enhanced online instruction in 2020-21. FCPS also continues to partner with internet service providers to expand free and low-cost home service options in communities.

Assessment

The focus for student assessments within all reopening plans will be to help staff identify students' learning needs and plan for upcoming instruction. Assessments geared to this purpose will be prioritized in the division assessment program. This includes use of measures for division-level analysis of learning loss that can be attributed to extended school closures. Resources and professional development will be provided for staff to support effective and appropriate assessment practices in an online learning environment, including limitations tied to test security in some cases.

Most standardized assessments are required to be administered in-person with strict test security measures in place. With a virtual start to the school year, most standardized assessments traditionally provided in the fall will be cancelled for 2020-21. Alternative data sources and methods will be used in some cases for instructional and programmatic decisions, when prior assessment data are not available. When in-person instruction resumes in FCPS schools, standardized assessments will also resume. A new system of assessment by appointment will be implemented to ensure students participating in full-time online instruction can still access standardized assessments, such as federally required Standards of Learning (SOL) and English.

Curriculum and Instruction

Recognizing the challenges and limitations many students may have experienced with learning during spring 2020, FCPS is revising curriculum guides at elementary, middle, and high school levels. Revised curriculum highlights essential standards for the grade level or course, as well as the prerequisite knowledge and skills learners need in order to be successful with new content. Updated pacing guides and resources ensure both the essential standards and prerequisite skills are fully addressed and offer strategies for staff to support learners with differing needs. Explicit resources are provided to support advanced learners, English learners, students with disabilities, and PreK learners. In addition to resources embedded in curriculum guides, specific strategies to support vulnerable learners, including economically disadvantaged students, are available. These include cultural responsiveness, digital citizenship, creating family partnerships, and using thinking routines.

Professional learning is provided for teachers to prepare for changes to teaching practices that will be necessary for online instruction and for in-person instruction with social distancing in schools. Best practices, samples, and guides support teachers to plan for an effective and engaging online classroom experience for the virtual launch. Additional best practices, samples, and guides will be published throughout the fall to assist staff in preparing to dial in for in-person instruction. Throughout these resources is a focus on building community, social-emotional learning, and establishing appropriate routines and procedures that maintain safe and healthy practices, such as attention to screen time, hand hygiene, and social distancing.

Instructional schedules in 2020-21 provide significantly more student-teacher interactions for all students than in spring 2020. All FCPS instructional models ensure students can reliably access all courses and programs required under the Virginia standards of learning. However, restrictions with online models necessitate adjustments to some course offerings, such as those requiring hands-on experiences. General classroom instruction at all levels features whole group, small group, and individual support for students.

Elements Present Across Operational Models (Continued)

Attendance and Grading

FCPS provides a 5-day educational program, and students are required to attend each day. Attendance is monitored daily for students participating in-person with social distancing, synchronously online, and independently/asynchronously. An electronic attendance notification will be sent to caregivers for any students scheduled for in-person or synchronous learning who are reported to be absent from class. Under the 2020-21 virtual launch for all, some students and families are in a position where they are unable to reliably attend online classes during normal school hours. A system will allow schools to document which students require an adjusted schedule for classes. Attendance for these students will be tracked via caregiver reporting at the elementary level and via student reporting at the middle and high school levels. Schools will monitor attendance patterns for all students to plan for intervention or supports, as needed.

New instruction delivered in the 2020-21 school year will be graded at both the elementary and secondary levels. Staff will use standard grading practices following the established FCPS grading and reporting policy. Resources are available to assist teachers in ensuring fair and equitable grading for virtual classroom assessments, as well as resources to support use of a cumulative gradebook model to account for students attending on different schedules and with different instructional models throughout the year.

Digital Resources

Whether learning takes place primarily in an online environment or face-to-face, expanded digital resources will ensure students have consistent access to high quality learning tools. Staff will continue to receive training and support in applying blended learning strategies, which involve a mix of teacher-directed and self-directed learning. Expanded digital reading materials and intervention supports at the elementary levels will enable students at these grades to benefit from supplemental learning tools beyond what their teachers provide on a daily basis.

Social Emotional Learning and Mental Health

The direct and indirect impacts of the global COVID-19 pandemic are expected to have a lasting effect on students and staff. FCPS will reinforce and enhance curriculum and supports focused on social-emotional learning, relationship-building, and successful transitions to new schools, classrooms, and environments, whether in-person or through distance learning. Instructional staff will participate in a series of professional learning modules on social-emotional learning and mental health supports within reopening. A new wellness screener and improvements to mental health resources and partnerships within schools and the county will offer another critical layer of support for students, families, and staff.

Specific strategies will include:

- Morning meetings or check-ins, intervention blocks, and advisory periods used to provide instruction in social-emotional learning and relationship building.

- Clinical and counseling staff providing mental health support and resources, including group or individual counseling and consultation for students and families, as needed.

- Behavior intervention teachers, applied behavior analysis coaches, and school psychologists supporting students and caregivers with additional interventions and resources.

Intervention Services

All learners will continue to require flexible and responsive support for their academic, behavioral, and wellness needs. FCPS has committed significant resources to support ongoing intervention services across 2020-21. Classroom teachers and support staff will receive professional development to plan and implement a multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS) reaching across synchronous and asynchronous instruction, in-person and online. Academic supports will provide focus and review of essential standards through whole-group and small-group instruction (Tier 1) and individual student intervention (Tiers 2 and 3). Schools will leverage resources and tools for systematic data collection, ongoing progress monitoring, and timely intervention. Support staff and resource teachers, including school counselors, psychologists, and social workers, will work flexibly across the school to address student needs. Students identified for intervention supports may be selected to receive supplemental teacher-directed specialized instruction on Monday mornings, outside their regular class schedule. This supplemental service could be provided through interactive online instruction or, when safety indicators allow, in-person at the school site.

Supports for Special Populations

Students with disabilities and English learners will be given special consideration to ensure appropriate instruction while complying with federal and state requirements. Under the continuum of delivery for in-person instruction, students from these special student populations whose families selected in-person instruction are likely to be offered part-time in-person instruction with social distancing in schools before this service is offered to other students. Additionally, students within these special populations may be invited to participate in supplemental teacher-directed specialized instruction on Monday mornings, outside their regular class schedule, either through interactive online instruction or, when safety indicators allow, in-person at the school site.

Students with Disabilities

Special education services for students with disabilities will include increased time for synchronous instruction and explicit expectations for greater consistency. Instructional delivery will be designed to ensure the least restrictive environment (LRE) as required by their IEP. As needed based on IEP goals, this will include in-person specialized instruction. Students will continue to receive access to instructional materials for use at home, as needed, including assistive technology tools. The student support model will be complemented by enhanced professional development for staff and training for caregivers. When necessary, virtual meetings will be used to convene special education procedural meetings, such as local screening committee, reevaluation, eligibility, IEP teams, etc.

English Learners (ELs)

ESOL services for English learners will include a defined minimum time allocation for English language development (ELD) instruction within the student's schedule, with opportunities for extended instructional time provided to recently arrived ELs, students with limited or interrupted formal education (SLIFE), and ELs identified for interventions. Formative ELD assessments will be created to assist monitoring of student progress in development of reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills. Bilingual counseling, social work services, and psychology services will be available to support students' social-emotional needs and academic advising. Family outreach and education will be provided to support families' understanding of distance learning models and how to support their children's learning.





As noted in the chapter on the FCPS operational approach for 2020-21, FCPS is providing families two options for instructional format during the school year. The in-person instruction continuum option is designed to honor the overarching aim to provide safe in-person learning for all FCPS students. The model adapts to changing health conditions throughout the year to dial in or dial out to the greatest level of safe in-person learning possible at any point in time. Service is provided on a continuum, as described in the section below, ranging from the most restrictive “temporary online for all,” with full-time online instruction, to the least restrictive “maximum in-person for all,” providing instruction at school four days per week for students whose families chose the in-person continuum.

Understanding the Continuum

Because in-person service is offered on a continuum and the exact levels of service are subject to changing health data, it is difficult to outline all possible variations for service. However, five key levels of the continuum are described below. Aspects of these key levels may be blended later in the year, particularly in a slow transition between the two least restrictive levels named here: “part-time in-person for all” and “maximum in-person for all.” In general the following progression is applied when dialing in and dialing out on the continuum.

May dial in service for individual students identified for supplemental specialized instruction or intervention before other students.

May dial in service for special student populations recognized with greater barriers to online learning, such as grades PreK-6, English learners, and students with disabilities before other student groups.

Dial in to part-time instruction for all students (e.g., 2 days per week) with social distancing in FCPS school buildings before the in-person increasing frequency

Dial in to a maximum of four-days per week of in-person instruction with social distancing in FCPS school buildings only if and when public health data trends and developments reflect that all significant risk of COVID-19 resurgence has passed

As illustrated in the table below, FCPS students experience some online learning at every level of the in-person continuum to support their core instruction. *Note that final decisions about the number of levels in the continuum, level names, and level definitions will be finalized by the start of the school year.*

IN-PERSON VERSUS ONLINE SERVICES WITHIN THE CONTINUUM					
CONTINUUM LEVEL	Temporary Online for All Students	Specialized Services In-Person for Select Students	Part-Time In-Person for Select Populations	Part-Time In-Person for All Students	Maximum In-Person for All Students
Expected In-Person Services	None	Select students identified for supplemental specialized instruction or intervention	Select populations (e.g., PreK-6, ESOL, SpEd), teacher- directed core instruction 1-2 days per week in-person with social distancing	All students, teacher-directed core instruction 2 days per week in-person with social distancing If conditions allow, select populations may be able to attend more often in-person	All students, core instruction 4 days per week in-person with social distancing
Expected Online Services	All students, teacher-directed for core instruction and any specialized services	All students, teacher- directed for all core instruction	Select populations, remainder of core instruction not provided in-person (teacher- directed and independent) All other student groups, teacher- directed for all core instruction	All students, independent asynchronous learning for the remainder of core instruction not provided in-person	All students, Monday independent asynchronous learning

In-Person Instruction Continuum (Continued)



Schedules

At each level of the continuum outside the most restrictive “temporary online for all,” in-person instruction requires a reduced schedule in school buildings to ensure students and staff can meet physical distancing requirements and to allow for enhanced cleaning and sanitation routines. At most levels of the continuum, students are in-person at a school site one or two days per week, with online instruction on days they are not present in a school building. Transportation is provided to FCPS facilities on students’ scheduled days according to FCPS transportation guidelines.

All Levels: Students access independent, asynchronous learning each Monday. Certain students are identified to receive additional intervention or specialized instruction on Monday morning to meet their program needs, such as IEP goals.

Elementary School: Students participate in all core classes each day, Tuesday through Friday. Depending on the continuum level, teacher-directed instruction for core instruction could be two to four days per week.

Middle and High School: Students participate on a block schedule Tuesday through Friday, with odd-numbered periods on Tuesday and Thursday and even-numbered periods on Wednesday and Friday. Depending on the continuum level, teacher-directed instruction for core instruction could be two to four days per week.

The sample schedule below illustrates how instruction will be delivered under the most restrictive continuum level, “temporary online for all.” This is the continuum level planned to launch the 2020-21 FCPS school year.

ALL GRADES SAMPLE* WEEKLY SCHEDULE FOR TEMPORARY ONLINE FOR ALL				
MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Student independent work or teacher-directed intervention and support.	Group 1 and 2 ONLINE AT HOME (MS/HS 1, 3, 5, 7)	Group 1 and 2 ONLINE AT HOME (MS/HS 2, 4, 6, 8)	Group 1 and 2 ONLINE AT HOME (MS/HS 1, 3, 5, 7)	Group 1 and 2 ONLINE AT HOME (MS/HS 2, 4, 6, 8)
Teacher planning and professional development.				

**Note that actual at-home schedules may vary based on school staffing*

The following sample schedule illustrates one model for how instruction could be delivered when in-person delivery has dialed in to the substantially less restrictive continuum level, “part-time in-person for all.” This is the continuum level previously planned for the launch of the 2020-21 school year, and it remains the goal for operations by winter, if health data improves adequately. Under this sample schedule, half of the students are served at the school on Tuesdays and Wednesdays and the other half are served at the school on Thursdays and Fridays. Students are assigned to Group 1 or Group 2 with consideration to maintain family groups on the same days. Students who are not attending in-person on any given day participate in independent online learning, using digital curriculum resources and instructional tasks assigned by their teachers.

ALL GRADES SAMPLE* WEEKLY SCHEDULE FOR PART-TIME IN-PERSON FOR ALL				
MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Student independent work or teacher-directed intervention and support.	Group 1 IN SCHOOL (MS/HS 1, 3, 5, 7)	Group 1 IN SCHOOL (MS/HS 2, 4, 6, 8)	Group 1 ONLINE AT HOME (MS/HS 1, 3, 5, 7)	Group 1 ONLINE AT HOME (MS/HS 2, 4, 6, 8)
	Group 2 ONLINE AT HOME (MS/HS 1, 3, 5, 7)	Group 2 ONLINE AT HOME (MS/HS 2, 4, 6, 8)	Group 2 IN SCHOOL (MS/HS 1, 3, 5, 7)	Group 2 IN SCHOOL (MS/HS 2, 4, 6, 8)
Teacher planning and professional development.				

**Note that actual in-school and at-home schedules may vary based on changing health data and school staffing*



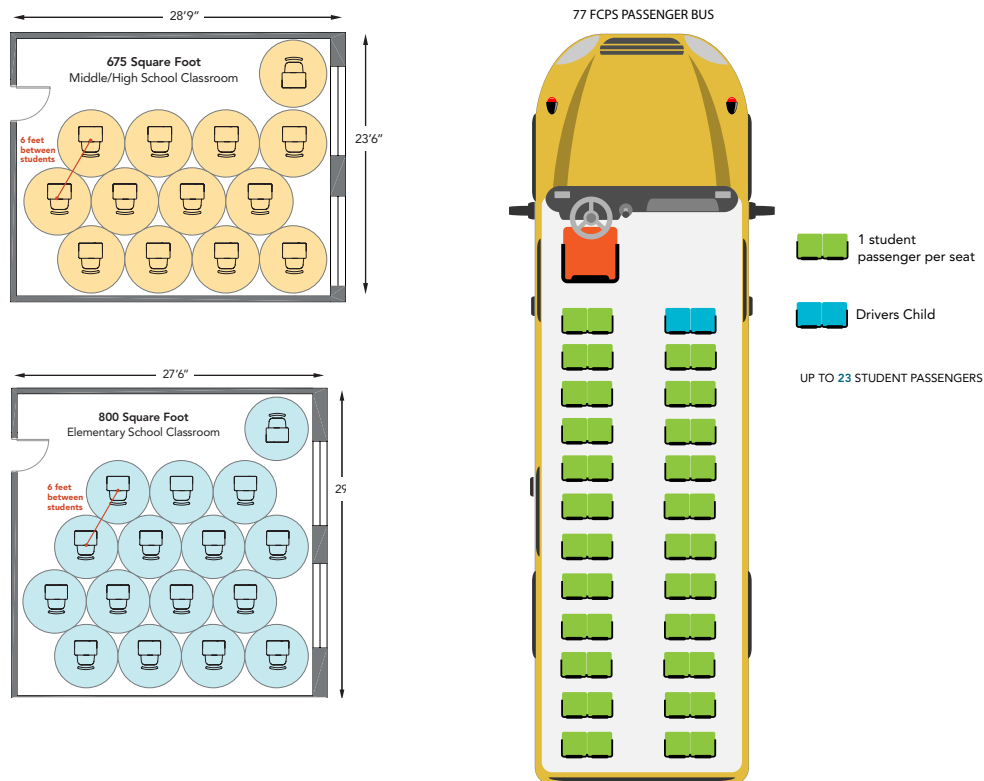
Decisions about bell schedules at each school, adjustments to the percentage of the student population attending a school each day, and actual rotational schedules will be finalized as division leadership processes health data and stakeholder feedback on implications for students, families, and staff. Individual student schedules for in-person rotations at the school will be communicated to families at least two weeks prior to the scheduled start of each new in-person continuum level.

Health Protocols and Social Distancing

At the heart of the in-person instruction continuum model is a continuous monitoring and balance of safety measures to mitigate health risk. Under this model, health monitoring protocols and social distancing are implemented in accordance with CDC and VDH guidance, as detailed in the chapter on health mitigation strategies.

A daily health screening form requires caregivers to report that their child is asymptomatic and has not been exposed to anyone who is symptomatic. Buildings undergo daily sanitizing for high-touch areas (doorknobs, handles, etc.) using a medical grade solution. Face coverings are required in FCPS facilities and on FCPS-provided transport. Schools and the division collaborate with the FCHD to rapidly and appropriately respond to any outbreaks in the community or school and to implement all necessary health and safety protocols.

FCPS building access is limited in accordance with health and safety guidelines, and visitor access is restricted. Six-foot separation is maintained whenever possible for both staff and students, and efforts are in place to limit mixing groups of students. A 3-foot VDH protocol combined with required face covering is applied as a back-up when 6-foot distancing is not possible for a particular space. Additionally, buses enact new capacity limits and seating guidelines, per health and safety expectations.





As noted in the chapter on the FCPS operational approach for 2020-21, FCPS is providing families two options for instructional format during the 2020-21 school year. Once the division begins to dial in on the in-person instruction continuum to provide educational opportunities in FCPS school buildings, the family choice will become available to continue with full-time online instruction for the academic year.

The full-time online option is designed with the overarching aim to provide families the stability for their schedules and routines. The model stays constant throughout the year regardless of changes to public health conditions. Families choosing this model recognize and accept that their children will not have regular in-person interactions with teachers and peers. Rather, they will engage in interactive lessons online. According to its design, this model is intended to be a full-year commitment between the school division and family. However, if health conditions should improve substantially allowing “maximum in-person for all” within the in-person continuum, the division will consider what additional choices may be offered to families at that time.

Schedules

The full-time online model involves independent online learning each Monday and teacher-directed synchronous instruction Tuesday through Friday. Students participating in the full-time online model are likely to have larger class sizes than their peers taking the same course under the in-person continuum. Individual student schedules for online instruction will be finalized and communicated by the end of August 2020.

All Levels: Students access independent, asynchronous learning each Monday. Certain students are identified to receive additional intervention or specialized instruction on Monday morning to meet their program needs, such as IEP goals.

Elementary School: Tuesday through Friday, students participate in:

- 3 hours per day (PreK-2) or 3.5 hours per day (grades 3-6) of teacher-directed, synchronous instruction for core curricula.

- 1 hour per day of specials classes (music, art, physical education, etc.)

- At least 1 hour for independent practice or specialized instruction, as needed, such as ESOL or special education services. The amount of special education service will be determined by IEP teams, with consideration given to individualized student needs.

Students will have opportunities to participate in choice activities each day to practice skills and extend their learning away from a computer screen.

Middle and High School: Students participate in teacher-directed synchronous instruction on a block schedule Tuesday through Friday, with odd-numbered periods on Tuesday and Thursday and even-numbered periods on Wednesday and Friday. Schedules vary depending on assigned courses and align to the base school whenever possible.

ALL GRADES SAMPLE* WEEKLY SCHEDULE FOR FULL-TIME ONLINE INSTRUCTION				
MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Student independent work or teacher-directed intervention and support. Teacher planning and professional development.	ONLINE AT HOME (MS/HS 1, 3, 5, 7)	ONLINE AT HOME (MS/HS 2, 4, 6, 8)	ONLINE AT HOME (MS/HS 1, 3, 5, 7)	ONLINE AT HOME (MS/HS 2, 4, 6, 8)

**Note that actual at-home schedules may vary based on school staffing*

To the extent possible, elementary and middle school students will be served by dedicated online FCPS teachers in a cohort model with other students from their school, their region, or the division. Courses will be taught using online courseware and digital curriculum resources along with synchronous direct instruction and support from an online FCPS teacher. High school students will be served through a combination of Online Campus courses, Virtual Virginia courses, and specialized course instruction from FCPS staff. When a cohort model cannot be established for a course or grade level, a hybrid model may be leveraged, in which staff support a combination of in-person and online learners using blended learning strategies and digital resources.

Full-Time Online Instruction (Continued)

Family Understandings and Commitments

Families were initially asked to communicate their intent to participate in the full-time online model by mid-July and commit to continuing with full-time online instruction for the full academic year. When the division begins to dial in to offer some in-person instruction, families will receive additional information about potential opportunities to adjust their initial choices.

Families of full-time online students should be prepared to support their children's active participation in all online learning activities. They will need to ensure their children have adequate space, materials, and technology access for their daily online instruction, requesting school assistance to provide a laptop and internet service, as needed. Families will need to be ready to follow the established daily learning schedule and will need to work with school staff to arrange for their children to participate in standardized assessments and other mandated educational activities. Families should recognize that full-time online instruction may not be able to support some specialized programs and course offerings that would otherwise be available to enhance student options and experiences, such as immersion, magnet, and certain specialized courses.



Additional Considerations for Reopening

As the division prepares for reopening schools, we recognize that there are additional considerations that must be addressed to ensure students, families, and staff are well supported in the upcoming transitions.

Supports for Staff

One goal of the FCPS Reopening Schools Plan is to ensure that all staff—instructional, clinical, operational, and administrative—have the resources to feel safe and comfortable returning to the workplace. Elements of this staff support model include the following.

Flexible Work and Leave Options

Provide updated resources and procedures, including:

- An updated telework regulation;

- Support accessing emergency leave, Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA), and other related benefits; and

- Use of the CDC health inventory, as it pertains to employees who may need an accommodation; and

- Allowing any teacher to request a full-time online teaching assignment. Teacher placements will be contingent on student enrollment numbers in the full-time online program. Teacher requests for full-time online instruction will be tiered based on the individual teacher's medical need, a family medical need, and finally preference without a medical need.

Personal Protective Equipment

Ensure staff have the necessary personal protective resources, as appropriate for their risk exposure, such as masks, gloves, gowns, face shields, etc.

Health and Wellness

Provide staff with support and resources to address any personal health and wellness needs.

Professional Development

Provide staff with the information, guidance, and professional learning necessary to support virtual instructional practices, health, and safety.

Childcare

FCPS employees with children attending FCPS schools, grades PreK-6, may request four days of instruction in school for their children. Eligible staff directly serve students in FCPS schools. This includes teachers, instructional assistants, administrators, custodians, cafeteria workers, bus drivers, and clinical support staff, such as school psychologists and school social workers.

Supports for Families

Another goal of the FCPS Reopening Schools Plan is to ensure that all families have the tools, resources, and supports to feel safe and comfortable as their children return to school. Elements of this family support model include the following.

Flexible Schooling Options

Provide families the opportunity to choose full-time online instruction or the in-person instruction continuum. Caregivers are encouraged to make choices based on health and safety concerns rather than course or program availability. If no preference is received for a student by the deadline, the student will automatically be enrolled for the in-person instruction continuum.

Food Services

Continue to provide meal services to students unable to attend school in person.

Language Services

Provide written translations of documents and communications in the eight most frequently spoken home languages in FCPS, and provide oral interpretation for any family who needs this service. Provide consistent access to translation resources, including United Language, Talking Points application, phone line responders, and bilingual parent liaisons.

Training and Support

Provide resources and training to help caregivers understand their roles in supporting students' academic success, including ongoing workshops and free consultations with the Parent Resource Center.

Technology Support

Expand laptop and MiFi distribution to ensure families have access to reliable technology and internet services to support their children's learning outside of school. Provide an online help desk to support students and caregivers with computer troubleshooting.

Family-School Engagement

Engage in regular two-way communication between families and their children's teachers and schools, with support from parent liaisons.

Additional Considerations for Reopening (Continued)

Athletics and Activities

Athletics and extracurricular activities support the goal of providing a well-rounded educational experience for students within the reopening process. FCPS will follow all CDC, VDH, and FCHD guidance for physical and social distancing, restricting the size of gatherings for indoor and outdoor spaces, disinfecting equipment, and other health and safety precautions. Virginia High School League (VHSL) phase guidance will be applied throughout reopening.

State guidance allows community use of FCPS fields and facilities to resume, effective June 12, 2020.

FCPS athletics conditioning and agility sessions began on June 22, 2020. All coaches completed mandatory training before conducting any sessions, and all sessions are held at outdoor fields and facilities. Practice sessions are limited to individual work, with no group or scrimmage activities. The fall competitive athletics season was postponed. Adjustments will be made to the winter and spring athletics seasons to accommodate the fall sports later in the year with guidance from the VHSL.

Clubs may meet both in person and in a virtual setting at the completion of the regular school day. Based on appropriate protocols proper accommodations will be available to allow clubs to remain active.

The Middle School After School Program will follow appropriate protocols to allow for continuity of programming.

The marching band season has been postponed until later in the school year. Schools will offer in-person marching band experiences whenever possible and may provide small group marching band practices prior to the start of the school year with proper health and safety modifications.

Communication Strategies

Multi-faceted communication strategies will allow the division to attain its goal to include stakeholders' input in reopening decisions and to reinforce trust and confidence in FCPS. Family and staff survey data will be used to inform the development and refinement of implementation plans for the two operational models. Survey data will reflect:

Family opinions about each of the FCPS reopening models;

Staff comfort levels in returning to work and the supports they need to be successful; and

Staff and family perceptions on the effectiveness of spring 2020 distance learning.

Division communication strategies are designed to engage all stakeholders through ongoing and up-to-date information about the decision-making process and reopening plans. These strategies include:

Clear and straightforward information to ease understanding about options, decisions, and timelines for fall;

Direct communication via mailings, email, and video messages;

Website and social media postings;

Town hall events;

Guaranteed translation services in eight most frequently spoken home languages;

Ongoing support for school-based outreach and communication tools; and

Collaboration with stakeholder groups, community organizations, faith-based organizations, and businesses to help get the message to families and staff.

Timelines for Key Decisions

All decisions will be led by the Fairfax County School Board and senior leadership team. Decisions will be based on the most recent public health data and guidance from the CDC as well as state and county health department. FCPS will utilize a series of scheduled School Board work sessions, town hall meetings, family and staff surveys, and recommendations from the Reopening Schools Task Force to gather and process information about community needs and the best available approach for serving FCPS students, families, and staff under difficult and evolving circumstances.



By June 26, 2020

Communicate an initial decision on the operational models that will be available for the first day of the 2020-21 school year.

Communicate timeline for families to indicate their preference to return with full-time online instruction or return for in-person instruction with social distancing in FCPS schools.

By July 9, 2020

Finalize the date for the first day of the 2020-21 school year.

By July 15, 2020

Parents should respond to the enrollment letter to indicate their preferred instructional model for each of their children. This deadline will enable FCPS to plan class schedules for full-time online and in-person instruction.

By July 20, 2020

Staff should submit their requests for school-aged childcare under the opportunity available for employees providing direct support to students.

By July 21, 2020

Decide on the beginning-of-year initial continuum level for in-school instruction. This allows families who chose in-person instruction for 2020-21 to know what their children's instructional model will look like for the start of the school year. This decision is subject to continuous analysis to determine when the continuum level may be dialed in.

By August 17, 2020

Laptop distribution begins. Each school develops a safe and efficient laptop distribution process.

By August 31, 2020

Communicate individual student schedules and teacher/course assignments.