



East Tallahatchie School District  
**2021-2022**



**Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and  
Continuity of Services Plan**

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# Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan

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# Introduction

The primary goal of the East Tallahatchie School District (ETSD) for the 2021-2022 school term is three-pronged: 1) to safely bring back students to in-person school settings; 2) to maximize learning and student achievement; and 3) to address students' social and emotional needs. Remote learning will only be considered if there is a localized outbreak or emergency. The information provided in this plan will be utilized by the district and schools to guide school operations and decision-making. We know that throughout the school year, we will need be ready to confront significant challenges, and that our collective task will be to find the best way to balance health and safety concerns with our mission as educators to support student learning and educator efficacy in the most effective and efficient ways possible.

## Guiding Principles

The core principles that underlie the plan are straightforward and consistent with our overriding goal of advancing our students' wellbeing and achievement. However, It should be noted that our goals and responsibilities as educators remain unchanged, and that It is our obligation to plan and execute processes that will achieve our goals and objectives despite any unfavorable circumstances we have to confront. Thus, the following guiding principles:

- **Health and safety:** We are committed to protecting our students, staff and families by adhering to the guidelines established by the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and other public health agencies, by providing face coverings, upgrading air filters, and maintaining standard operating procedures that ensure adherence to social distancing standards and the implementation of student/staff hygiene best practices.
- **Accelerating student learning:** We will focus on grade-level content as our academic priority, rather than on remediation. All students will benefit from individualized learning paths informed by assessment data and student work, and we will provide targeted supports to English learners, students with disabilities, homeless students and other vulnerable student populations.
- **Prioritizing equity for all communities:** We will be intentional in our determination that the current national health emergency will not be used as an excuse to worsen inequities that may exist between wealthy school districts and high poverty school districts or for vulnerable children. To do this, we will commit to regular practices of monitoring and analysis of decision-making and practices, as they are vital components in ensuring that we always have equity in the forefront of district and school operations.
- **Commitment to stakeholder engagement and support:** As an integral part of our planning and equity processes, we will also engage with stakeholders through use of surveys, in-person and virtual feedback sessions, focus groups, and workgroups to provide updates and gain feedback on a regular basis.



## Maintaining an Environment of Fluidity and Continuity

### Accelerating Student Learning

Most students will enter the 2021-2022 having experienced some learning interruptions during the 2020-21 school term. These interruptions may have created unique academic, social and emotional challenges for some students and families. Therefore, it is the intent of the school district to maintain a focus on accelerating student learning through the use of instructional models and strategies that prioritize the following areas:

- Engaging all students in core grade level content aligned to the Mississippi College and Career Ready PreK-12 Standards and state frameworks for all content areas, starting at the beginning of the school year, and the utilization of scope and sequence documents and pacing guidance that will be developed or revised to assist school leaders and teachers with prioritizing standards aligned to grade level content
- Creating scaffolds to make grade level content accessible for students and to support unfinished learning that is essential for students to master grade level standards
- Eliminating gaps in foundational skills learning and knowledge through differentiated learning
- Utilizing on line learning intervention/acceleration platforms that will allow students to engage in personalized learning scenarios that are responsive to students' individual needs

### Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)

By effectively leveraging available resources, and strategically monitoring the effectiveness of those resources on student outcomes, school-based professionals will be empowered with the best information necessary to support more effective two-way communication with vulnerable students and their families. MTSS teams will have access to several tools and resources in providing a system of tiered supports for meeting the needs of all learners. These include:

- utilization of classroom engagement trackers to identify varying levels of student academic engagement, at the individual, classroom, and school levels, so as to target groups of students with available supports and to monitor the effectiveness of those supports over time
- Identification of resources to support triangulation of multiple data points for effective data-based decision making
- providing direct coaching support for school leaders and teachers in developing strategies to support small group instruction and individualized supports for vulnerable students, as well as developing systems to monitor the effectiveness of those supports

## Academics and Instruction

The Academic Calendar will cover 180 student days divided into four nine-week terms. Teachers will utilize CCSD's pacing guides which identify standards, skills, competencies, etc. that make up the district's core curricula. The day-to-day instructional focus will be grade-level and previous grade-level priority standards. Teachers will also use a combination of digital and print resources to support adequate coverage of standards.

**Pre K– Kindergarten.** The district's kindergarten model will, at a minimum, consist of 330 minutes (exclusive of non-instructional activities such as restroom breaks, lunch, etc.) of in-person instruction, along with additional extended day asynchronous instruction and individualized learning to round out a typical student week. The 330 minutes include time for English/language arts, mathematics, science, social studies and supplementary social-emotional learning (SEL) conversation circles and tutorial classes. Resource classes will include physical education, fine arts, and health. The time for resource/tutorial classes will be scheduled in a flexible manner throughout the school day/week. An emphasis on early foundational literacy skills will be basic to the kindergarten curriculum. Students will receive ELA and math small group instruction daily and staff will ensure that all students receive targeted support based on their unique needs. Bell schedules will be informed by transportation times and state guidelines for identification of instructional hours, and will be staggered, when necessary, to adhere to public health guidance and safety concerns.

**Elementary: Grades 1–4.** Students in grades 1–6 will have, at a minimum, 330 minutes or just under 4 hours of in-person instruction daily. An emphasis on foundational literacy skills and knowledge building will form the basis of the ELA instruction. Additional time will be created for math, science, social studies, and resource classes such as individualized learning/tutoring sessions, fine arts, physical education, and health. These minutes do not include time students spend transitioning from class to class, participating in breakfast and lunch activities, or recess and extended day asynchronous activities. Bell schedules will be informed by transportation times and state guidelines for instructional hours, and will be staggered to adhere to public health guidance and safety concerns. These minutes do not include time students spend transitioning from class to class, participating in breakfast and lunch activities, or recess and extended day asynchronous activities.

**Middle Grades: 5–8.** Students in grades 7–8 will have approximately 400 minutes of in-person instruction, combined with additional time for tutoring and individualized instruction in an extended day asynchronous instruction program. Bell schedules will be informed by transportation times and state guidelines for instructional hours, and will be staggered to adhere to public health guidance. A traditional middle grades schedule supporting a structure of core classes (mathematics, ELA, science, and social studies instruction) will be maintained daily. Tutorial classes and resource classes (including CTE, fine arts, physical education, and health) will also be inserted into the daily schedule. These minutes do not include time students spend transitioning from class to class, participating in breakfast and lunch activities, or recess. These minutes do not include time students spend transitioning from class to class, participating in breakfast and lunch activities, or recess and extended day asynchronous activities.

**High School** The high school model will have a minimum of 400 minutes for instruction. High school students will be scheduled for courses based on their grade level and credit needs. Their schedules will be created with an emphasis on selecting classes necessary to meet graduation requirements. The high school may use a variety of scheduling models based on unique programmatic offerings and student

needs, a seven-period day, and periodic utilization of a modified block schedule. The high school will use seminar classes for tutoring, remediation, interventions and enrichment sessions. The seminar periods will allow teachers to intentionally work with students in Intervention/remediation/enrichment blocks designed to meet individual student needs, from literacy interventions to college and career needs to Advanced Placement small group sessions. All teachers will be actively engaged in supporting student achievement during seminar time and all content teachers will be assigned to a facilitation team and/or use this time to provide additional interventions for students. Before intervention blocks, teachers and instructional coaches will identify students with specific skills and gaps and plan instruction to meet the needs of their learners and small groups during the intervention time, using a tailored approach based on the student, content area, performance to date, etc. Time during intervention blocks may be used for explicit teaching, checking progress, and providing feedback. Teachers will use meaningful, targeted exercises that are aligned to identified standards to engage their students and to provide time to answer clarifying questions. After intervention blocks, will review student data and progress and revise instructional and support plans for students based on key takeaways and insights from analyzing student data. Bell schedules will be informed by transportation times and state guidelines for instructional hours, and will be staggered to adhere to public health guidance. Extended day activities will be based on students' academic, social and emotional needs.

- **College and Career Readiness (CCR) Intervention and Support Structure:** This space allows for CTE students to work on related projects, and receive coursework support.
- **Dual Enrollment:** The district will continue to move forward with dual enrollment opportunities for both fall and spring semesters. Students enrolled in dual enrollment programs will also receive check-ins and support during seminar time.

Staff and students will also use seminar time for a variety of CCR-related activities, such as On Track to Graduate programming, college virtual visits, school counseling sessions, small and large groups sessions, career and guest speakers, career and college fairs, and work-based learning check-ins. In addition to CTE teachers, other content teachers can be used to provide support for CTE students during this time.

### **Extended School Year Program**

The proposed summer learning experience has been designed to support our elementary, middle and high school students who may have experienced learning loss due to the pandemic. The goal will be to help students get a head start on next year's learning. If feasible, the district will offer the 2021 summer extended year programs to all grades. Programs will be focused on helping students engage in unfinished learning following this unprecedented school year, with a focus on mathematics, literacy, science, writing, enrichment activities, SEL issues, and preparing for the next grade level. Programs will -

- be offered at no cost to all students, with transportation available
- as in-person instruction
- run four (4) days per week), approximately 4.5 hours per day (elementary and middle school programs)
- offer credit recovery course to high school students
- June 3, 2021-June 30, 2021 and July 5-July 28

The district's summer enrichment and acceleration activities plans have as a focus the acceleration and expansion on student learning for the current grade and previewing what students will learn at the next grade level. Students will work in flexible learning groups and will use a range of learning strategies as part of their summer learning. The summer program includes enrichment opportunities outside the core subject areas of Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies

A ten-day induction program for kindergartners is being planned for mid-July.

Families will hear directly from their schools about the programs the school will offer.

#### CTE and Work-Based Learning

The district will collaborate with teachers in CTE pathways to prioritize the knowledge, skills, and abilities that students will need for certifications and employability. This prioritized content will be translated into a scope and sequence for each course that will be aligned across the district. In addition, teachers will utilize a model unit plan to provide instruction in a virtual setting. In recognizing the additional resources required for this transition, CTE staff will be review their resources and equipment needs, including high-quality demonstration videos, on line curriculum, appropriately equipped computers with the software that some of the pathways will need, and resources for students to use at home.

CTE teachers will play an integral role in informing these decisions. They will meet on a regular basis to share best practices, resources, and innovative ideas for how to continue to support students' skill acquisition. Staff will be offered curricular resources and regular professional learning communities to support both in-person and virtual CTE instruction. Cleaning and safety procedures will be in effect, including sanitizing and disinfecting equipment based on district protocols; and additional equipment will be purchased when possible to minimize sharing of equipment.

#### Work-Based Learning

Work-based learning opportunities will remain an important part of the CTE career readiness framework. In addition to working with existing employer partners to provide students with as many on-site work opportunities as possible, the district's work-based learning team will also be developing new virtual partnerships and relationships. The CTE team will also secure a set of job shadow and career presentation videos that CTE staff can use and share with students during in-person instruction. As the district pursues in-school instruction, CTE staff will provide instructors, students, and employers with ongoing and updated guidance about how students can engage safely in work-based learning experiences, including internships and apprenticeships, expectations, and protocols,

## Monitoring Student Progress

The district understands that as a result of COVID-19, many students will be entering a new academic school year with preexisting gaps coupled with unfinished teaching and learning from prior years. The district's assessment strategy will be to support student's acceleration in learning with assessments that can be used as tools to identify students' learning deficits, as well as their progress, in mastering grade-level standards. Thus, the district plans to administer assessments to diagnose student understanding, to identify gaps in foundational skills, and to develop a plan to overcome those gaps. Doing so will enable staff to answer key questions about our students: where are they, where do they need to go, and how do we get them there? This approach is consistent with the purpose and use of assessments in prior years.

Teachers and service providers will collect data, whether in-person or remotely, and use the data to monitor each student's academic progress and to develop progress reports. The district and schools will continue to issue progress reports and report cards for the purpose of communicating to caretakers the progress of their children.

## Monitoring

High-quality diagnostic assessments in ELA and mathematics will be administered at least three times a year to measure students' core skills progress during set amounts of time

- The first set of diagnostic assessments will be administered in late September/early October to support schools' focus to create welcoming and supportive learning environments for students and adults
- Data from these assessments will also be used to support the monitoring of trends in learning gaps, growth of students, and identify foundational skill gaps that need to be addressed during intervention and individualized learning blocks
- Short-cycle, formative assessments in ELA and mathematics will be embedded in the curriculum to monitor student learning of the content and to allow teachers to tailor their instruction to meet the needs of the students. Data from these assessments are used to assess student knowledge and application of delivered content, scope and sequence pacing, and instructional scaffolding
- Summative assessments will be quarterly assessments used to gauge students' mastery of the content delivered based on the adapted scope and sequence pacing guides
  - o They will occur in all content areas at the end of units to assess student knowledge and pacing
  - o Data from these assessments are used to assess scope and sequence pacing and student knowledge and application of the content

- The short cycle formative and summative assessments will be standards-based and provide a comprehensive picture of student performance on curriculum-based assessments, day-to-day instructional decision-making and to inform actions around curriculum adjustments, professional development, and ongoing implementation support.

A strong data cycle, along with on-going staff training and professional development, will complement assessment administration to help educators grow in their capacity to effectively reflect, analyze, interpret, and apply data-driven insights from the results of the assessments to inform grade level instruction and monitor student progress. For school staff to do this effectively, the district will ensure that staff are provided with, trained on, and consistently using standard data inquiry protocols.

Timely tools and reports in support of data inquiry will be used to support identification and implementation of strategies for whole group, small group and individualized student learning. Staff will be required to adjust instruction, provide feedback to students, and recommend supports to families based on assessment results and student progress. Families will also be provided reports summarizing their student's performance with strategies and next steps that they can do at home to support their students.

Finally, staff will deliver instruction informed by insights from the assessments. They will also receive professional resources and ongoing training on assessment administration, effective use of data and understanding student assets, analysis best practices, student support, adjusting instruction appropriately, and supporting grade level access and avoiding over-remediation.

### **Supports for Special Education Students**

The district/schools will 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. The district will ensure that students with disabilities have access to the general education curriculum with the services and supports identified on their 504 Plan or Individualized Education Program (IEP) despite the learning environment being utilized.

- Schedules for special education will be based on the individual needs identified on a student's IEP. Schedules for related service providers will be based upon the individual's related service provider's caseload. Services will be provided during instruction (inclusion) or pulled out depending upon the student's IEP. Where appropriate, and to ensure equitable access to instruction, IEPs will be amended or revised to reflect appropriate accommodations and modifications based on students' individualized needs and the service delivery model that will be provided should the district revert to a virtual learning platform/environment.
- **Section 504:** The district will continue to implement accommodations in accordance to students' 504 Plans. The 504 Plan document may be revised to include virtual learning platforms should the district have to revert to utilizing virtual environment. 504 teams will schedule meetings to be held in-person, through use of telephones, or through use of approved virtual meeting platforms to revise each student's 504 Plan with parent agreement.

- Instructional technology staff will be sought after to collaborate with and/or provide direct support to special education staff and students when it is necessary to use virtual classrooms to ensure accessibility and utilization of technology tools, which will further accelerate student learning.
- Implementation of effective instructional strategies in Special Education will provide student access to the general education curriculum and help to develop independent learners who are able to think critically and fully engage within the world around them. The district will also provide professional development to teachers that encompasses utilization of high leverage practices.

## Grading

The district is committed to providing a student-centered educational program, focusing on grade level standards. To support these efforts and to establish a system where daily instruction and assessments inform instructional decisions and programmatic needs of all learners, the district will provide a fair and equitable process for evaluating and reporting student progress that is understandable to students and their parents/guardians. The district will return to a variation of its pre-pandemic grading policy, though some adjustments to the weights of different components (formative and summative assessments) may be made. Student classroom participation, homework, and classwork routines and procedures will be reviewed for reliability and validity as tools for awarding grades.

Students will be graded in the 2021-2022 school year using the traditional grading and promotion policy which was temporarily suspended during the spring school closure.

Grading will be broken up as follows:

- Assessments and Benchmark
  - o **Formative Assessments:** Built into the curriculum, are more frequent, and are used to monitor a student's mastery based on the scope and sequence of curriculum and individualized learning
  - o **Summative Assessments:** Assess mastery of the complete set of grade-level standards
- Classwork, Participation, and Homework
  - o Classwork: The written or oral work done in a classroom by a student (distinguished from homework)
  - o Participation: The active engagement of students expressing their ideas in a way that others can understand and demonstrating their understanding of a topic
  - o Homework: An assignment given to a student to be completed outside the regular class period
  - o Virtual and hybrid considerations

## **Operations, Health, and Safety**

With schools opening in the fall for in-person learning, school facilities and /or grounds will be accessible for a variety of activities including device distribution, meal sites, back-to-school events, student classes, student assessments, and small group instruction. During the summer, all school sites will also be open for in-person extended school year programs.

Based on guidance from the Center for Disease Control (CDC), the Mississippi Department of Health (MOH), the Mississippi Department of Education (MOE), and advice and input from health advisors, standard operating procedures outlining specific protocols that support health and safety have been adopted for the operation of in-person learning environments. The district will continue to update its standard operating procedures to reflect current guidance. Standard operating procedures will be modified for use with hybrid environments. The district will also organize and provide training and simulation opportunities for students, staff, and families to practice designated health and safety behaviors. Key procedures are described below.

### **Entering and Exiting Buildings.**

Although each of the district's school's approach to entering school buildings may look different on arrival at school, there will be predetermined drop off points for school vehicles and personal car transport. Arrival of students will be staggered to promote social distancing and safe management of walkers, and school and/or personal vehicles. Procedures will be in place for students to line up with a specific cohort while maintaining social distancing as they arrive, with pre-assigned doors and pathways to follow within school buildings and between buildings and transportation. Contingency plans will be utilized in case of inclement weather. Staff will be assigned to ensure students entering and exiting the schools adhere to safety guidelines. As students enter school, there will be processes and procedures in place to ensure hands are cleaned prior to students reporting directly to their classrooms. This will include students either going to handwashing stations or using hand sanitizer at school and/or classroom entrances.

Similar to arrival time, there will be predetermined pick up points for school vehicles and personal car transports. Dismissal of students will be staggered to promote social distancing and the safe management of walkers and school and personal vehicles.

### **Responding to a Confirmed COVID-19 Case or a COVID-19-like Illness**

A COVID-19 like illness for the purposes of this document is defined as: New onset cough or shortness of breath OR at least two (2) of the following: fever of 100.4 degrees or higher, chills, shivering, muscle pain, sore throat, headache, loss of sense of taste or smell, and gastrointestinal symptoms (nausea, vomiting or diarrhea), as per guidance from the Mississippi Department of Health. Staff, students, and families will be asked stay home if they have symptoms of a COVID-19 like illness, have been diagnosed with COVID-19, are waiting for test results, or have been exposed to someone with symptoms or a confirmed or suspected case. They should not return until it is appropriate as per guidance outlined from MOH.

Steps that must be taken include:

- If a student presents with any new symptoms of a COVID-19 like illness during the day, they should be isolated immediately in a Wellness Room

- If a staff member presents any symptoms, s/he should notify the building administrator (using digital or physically distanced communication) and leave after consulting with the building administrator and ensuring alternative supervision for any students in his/her classes
- Students, staff or visitors who answer yes to any of the health screening questions must go home (for students, only if the parent is still there) or report to the wellness room to await pick up
- If a student has an existing health condition on the COVID-19 symptoms list, screen for new symptoms only. For a more thorough consultation, the student can be referred to the school nurse
- If a student is in the Wellness Room due to COVID-19 symptoms, parents must be called to pick up the child ASAP. The school nurse should communicate testing options to the family and provide the family with guidance around social distancing while test results are pending. The student and supervising staff are to continue wearing face coverings while the student is in the Wellness Room.
- If a student, staff or visitor has symptoms consistent with a COVID-19 like illness (as defined by guidance from the Mississippi Department of Health), the district will follow current CDC guidelines.
- Any staff, student or visitor with a confirmed case of COVID-19 or a COVID-19 like illness must report their case to the school administrator who will report to the office of the superintendent.
- Each school is to identify a Wellness Room to use for isolation. The Wellness Room will be used as a safe place for students who have answered YES to the screening questions or who feel sick during the day to wait for their parents.
- After the student in question is picked up, custodians should clean and disinfect the Wellness Room while wearing gloves and a face covering.

## **Vaccinations**

The district is encouraging all staff to be vaccinated. Communications have also been forwarded to parents on steps they can take to get their child(ren) vaccinated.

## **Extracurricular Activities and Athletics**

Safety remains our top priority as we return to extracurricular activities this fall. The district will provide professional development and training to athletic personnel, extracurricular activity sponsors, parents, and students in "best practices" regarding the safe return to participation in extracurricular activities in the schools

All athletic and band activities will follow the health and safety policies of the MHSAA, CDC health and safety guidance, the Governor's executive orders, and guidance provided by local school board policies.

Students must be in in-person school to participate in extracurricular activities.

### **Social Distancing, Hand Washing, Face Coverings, and Health Screenings**

Social distancing, hand washing, face coverings, and health screening procedures are to be followed carefully and consistently in order to prevent illness spread.

- To reinforce these procedures, district approved signage with reminders of protective measures and descriptions of how to prevent the spread of COVID-19 are to be posted.
- When students are in the building, developmentally appropriate instructional activities that teach precautions for self and others should be integrated into the daily routine to regularly reinforce the procedures. Verbal and visual messaging should be developmentally appropriate and accessible for all staff, families, and students, including those with disabilities.
- Social distancing is deliberately increasing the physical space between individuals to limit the spread of COVID-19. Staying a minimum of three (3) feet away from other people reduces the risk of exposure to someone who may be infected.
- Proper hand hygiene protocols will include the following:
  - o Wash hands regularly with soap and water for at least 20 seconds
  - o If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol
- All staff, students, and visitors will be required to wear a face covering when inside a school building. Staff and students will be provided with face coverings, but may wear their own masks if the masks meet school criteria. IF visitors DO NOT have such covering, request that they will be provided one from the school representative. If that is not possible, work to fulfill their needs in a safe and distant manner. The district will work to provide all schools with a supply of disposable face masks in the event that staff forget their face covering or visitors arrive to the site without proper face coverings
- Other physical barriers between individuals (e.g. desk dividers, sneeze guards, etc.) may be used as needed.

## **Bus Transportation**

When considering the logistics of school reopening during COVID-19, school districts must make it a priority to plan for the safe transportation of students. Transportation provides unique challenges for social distancing; therefore, parents and staff will need to work together to ensure a safe environment for riding the bus. Examples of the guidance follows:

- Parents should provide guidance to their children on appropriate social distancing at bus stops.
- Students are expected to wear masks while on the bus - with the exception of students with documented medical or sensory conditions that would be adversely impacted by wearing a mask.
- Students will use hand sanitizer upon entering and exiting the bus, or upon entrance into the school or classroom after departing the bus.
- Students will be given an assigned seat. Students must sit in their assigned seats.
- Siblings, and those sharing a household, will be seated together.
- Students should allow appropriate distance between each other when entering and exiting the bus.
- Seats will be wiped down between routes.
- Windows will be open when the weather permits.
- Misconduct on the bus will result in disciplinary action that may include suspension from the bus.

## **General Cleaning Protocols**

- Surfaces frequently touched by multiple people (e.g. door handles, phones, light switches, faucets, toilets, urinals, fixtures, dispensers, handrails, walls that are 6 feet high, other surfaces and objects that students and staff frequently touch) should be cleaned and disinfected daily. More frequent cleaning and disinfecting may be required based on level of use.
- EPA approved disinfectants must be used for cleaning of all surfaces in accordance with product instructions
- Products must not be used near children, must be used with adequate ventilation to prevent inhaling of fumes, and must be stored securely away from children
- Desks, chairs, counters, file cabinets, and computers should be cleaned and disinfected before staff and students arrive each morning

- Soft and porous surfaces (e.g., rugs, upholstered furniture) are difficult to disinfect and should be removed; area rugs should be cleaned, rolled up, and tagged for storage
- Wear disposable gloves for all tasks in the cleaning process, including handling trash; gloves should be removed carefully to avoid contamination of the wearer and the surrounding area
- Once cleaning tasks are complete, hands should be washed with soap and water for 20 seconds

### Space Planning

Preparing to bring students and staff back into school buildings requires careful planning at the classroom and school level to ensure spaces adhere to our health and safety standards. School plans will be developed and reviewed to ensure that the school plans are in line with appropriate health and safety guidelines before students return into the building.

In working with each school, district staff will help identify strategies to address any challenges as needed and to determine alternative options, such as making minor adjustments at the room-level, redistributing space within the building, and looking into satellite sites

### Building Set-Up, Use, and Access

School buildings are planned to be open to support a variety of operations this fall. This will likely mean staff, visitors, and in some circumstances, students, will be present and will have to safely enter, exit, and navigate buildings. Key procedures are highlighted below:

- To support safe building use, floor decals and signs will be provided to each school to use throughout the building to support consistent and clear expectations
- In order to provide a physical barrier between visitors and staff, schools will set up portable plexiglass guards in the main office reception areas in all school buildings
- When in-person interaction must take place, the following procedures are recommended:
  - o Maintain a distance between all people of at least three feet
  - o People must stay home if they feel sick at all and notify their supervisor
  - o Handshaking or any physical contact with anyone is not permitted

- o Hands are to be washed with soap and water frequently for at least 20 seconds
- o Common touch points (e.g. workspaces, devices, objects, and surfaces including tools) are to be clean and disinfected frequently
- o Avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands
- o Cover coughs or sneezes with a tissue, then throw the tissue into the trash
- o Wear a face covering in the presence of others and when navigating the building

## **Gathering and Meeting Spaces**

Auditoriums, gyms, or other internal gathering spaces. These areas, both due to COVID and due to general food handling safety practices, must be frequently disinfected.

- These spaces will be used on a case-by-case basis, per Mississippi guidelines (MOH, governor, etc.)
- Limiting access to such spaces will also ensure that the regular disinfecting of such rooms is able to be limited so that custodial staff can focus on common areas and classrooms
- Spaces may be used take movement breaks at a safe distance; students should keep their face coverings on for movement breaks
- Spaces may be used for one cohort at a time
- Spaces should be used to support food service operations, meal site distribution efforts, or for specified student learning activities.

## **Entry and Exit, Hallways, Transitions, and Common Spaces**

While use of common spaces should be minimized to reduce opportunities for germs to spread between those in the building, such areas are common and so will receive more traffic than individual classrooms or offices. Schools will implement tight procedures to minimize person-to-person contact in hallways and restrooms.

## **Entrance and Exit Points**

Schools should identify, if possible, one main point of entry and exit and limit access to other points of entry unless a specific group needs such access. To ensure individuals are aware of staff, students, or visitors coming and going from the site, the number of entry and exit points from the school should be limited.

The identified entry and exit point should meet ADA compliance for safety and navigation for those with disabilities

- Schools should consider designating ONE door for entry and ONE door for exit to support general flow of traffic and to minimize the proximity of people when entering and exiting the building
- Everyone must complete a health screening before entering the building
- Schools should use the floor decals or tape to mark off spacing where people will wait outside of the door to enter and complete the health screening
- Develop a plan to use shaded areas, overhangs, other coverings, etc. to provide protection in the case of adverse weather conditions. Position a person at the normal screening location to direct traffic to the new screening location should it change Hallways
- Mark hallways and entrances to indicate one-way routes and six feet of spacing where people may wait in line (at restrooms, classroom entrances, etc.) using tape or provided "6 feet" decals
- Post signs outside of each door, restroom, and other places where staff, visitors, or students form lines to reinforce the importance of maintaining six feet of distance

### **Water Coolers and Fountains**

- Staff and students are encouraged to bring reusable water bottles each day
- Water coolers, where used, need to be cleaned and disinfected between use
  - o Hands are to be washed before and after using the water cooler
- Signage should be posted behind water coolers reminding users of best practices around use

### **Restrooms**

- Arrange restroom breaks so that the number of students in the restrooms are minimum
- Place signs around the restrooms that remind staff and students to socially distance and how to properly wash hands
- If possible, designate which people will have access to which restrooms to minimize cross contamination or consider only opening a limited number of restrooms

- Restrooms should be cleaned at least twice daily as well as each evening prior to closing the building
- Daily clean high touch surfaces using appropriate disinfectant
- Daily check restrooms routinely to ensure all soap, paper towel, and toilet paper dispensers are stocked

## Meal Service and Food Distribution

Access to healthy meals supports students' ability to learn and thrive, regardless of whether they are in the school building or learning virtually. The district recognizes the fundamental importance of child nutrition through the district's board adopted Wellness Policy, and in alignment with the CDC's Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child model.

### **Meal and Food Strategies**

Ensuring student access to adequate nutrition is extremely important - whether students are learning in the school building or in a virtual environment.

For in-school environments, the food service department will 1) prepare meal service layouts that maximize on-site meal service based on CDC health and safety guidance; 2) develop and implement safety protocols and trainings for all Food Services staff; 3) conduct building, kitchen and equipment checks to ensure readiness; and 4) reconfigure kitchen space to maximize staff distancing during preparation.

- Students will go to the cafeteria by cohorts
- Students will rotate through the cafeteria, eating meals at tables marked for social distancing; meals may also be served in classroom, in public places such as the gym, or outdoors as weather permits

Students and staff will be reminded, through signage, trainings, and/or regular reinforcements, of the importance of following proper health and safety protocols before, during, and after all meal services. If the district has to revert to using a virtual platform for serving students academically, the food service department will provide students with a "Bagged to Go" meal via meal routes serviced by school busses and food service staff.

## Teacher and Staff Professional Development

All District staff will participate in various training and professional development sessions to support a safe and student-centered school opening. Data collected from a staff needs assessment will help guide the development of training/coaching topics, training participation protocols and acquisition of resources. These sessions will ensure all school staff members have the knowledge to follow and promote safety guidelines, as well as support students socially, emotionally and academically. Content will be delivered via a mixture of asynchronous (screencasts, documents, self-paced online learning) and synchronous (live virtual) sessions. Materials and recordings from professional learning will be accessible from the District's website so that staff can use the resources on an ongoing basis.

During the summer prior to the 2021-2022 school term, professional learning opportunities will be offered to all teachers. All content specific professional learning will emphasize the importance of continuing to teach grade level appropriate content to ensure our students are prepared for college and career upon graduation. Between the summer session and the fall pre-service PD sessions, teachers will be provided eight days of training; some days will be allocated for school-specific learning while others will be facilitated by district curriculum teams. To support teachers in the reopening of schools, plans are being developed for professional learning aligned to the following overarching goals:

- supporting standards-based curriculum implementation,
- utilizing and leveraging digital learning tools, and
- using data and diagnostic information to determine the best opportunities for students to engage with during asynchronous learning

Professional development will also include providing professional learning for teachers to support specific student populations - including gifted and advanced learners, students with disabilities, English-language learners, and students in need of tiered intervention supports.

It is essential that all teachers and support staff be supported in their efforts to meet the wide range of needs of their students, as virtual learning can create barriers that limit the ability of some students to be seen for who they are and for the potential they possess. In that spirit, the district will also continue to create and deliver professional learning that prepares district and school-based staff for in-school, hybrid and virtual learning environments.

Categorically, professional training will provide for -

**Health and Safety** - Throughout the year, training will be provided to administrators, teachers, and staff to ensure that they have the necessary knowledge and skills to implement the District's health and safety plan, aligned with the American Pediatric Society, World Health Organization, and Center for Control Disease (CDC) requirements. Topics will be organized into three key areas: facilities cleaning, sanitizing, disinfecting and ventilation; social distancing and other safety protocols; and monitoring student and staff health.

**Student Supports** - School leaders, teachers, and staff will participate in a series of facilitated development sessions to gain curriculum and technology skills, to review resources, and to prepare for an intensive focus on

social emotional development, mental health and trauma at the start of school. School leaders may also receive training on systems and practices that support staff wellness.

**Academic Support** - Teachers and school leaders will participate in professional learning aligned to the instructional frameworks, strategies to support implementation of instructional expectations for both face-to-face and digital learning environments. This content of the training will support teachers and leaders in ensuring equity and access to quality grade-level instruction for all students.

## **Formal Observations for Teachers and Support Staff**

Two formal observations are required as part of the evaluation process for educators. In-school observations will follow guidelines provided by the Mississippi Department of Education. However, in the event that the in-person staff evaluation model must be converted for use with a virtual model, the evaluation process will capture performance behavior via remote access to lessons, lesson plans, etc. The district will develop (prior to the beginning of the 2021-2022 term) an observation and evaluation framework that outlines "Look-Fors" for on-line instruction. Training on the protocol will be provided to all staff during pre-service PD. This framework will serve as a guide for qualified observers, mentors, and instructional coaches in helping to provide informal feedback throughout any periods of virtual instruction.

## **Engaging with our Families, Communities, Students, and Partners**

Engaging families and communities will involve developing and implementing a variety of communication activities and tools:

- **Monthly Parent Meetins:** to provide training and learning opportunities for parents, teachers, principals, and staff to get well connected on best practices to support learning in a variety of learning environments. Through in-person and virtual workshops, online resources, and videos the district aims to meet the unique needs of all families to support learning at home. The focus areas of trainings and supports will be:
  - o best practices in virtual learning for parents and families (e.g. understanding academic content, accessing technology, two-way communications, etc.)
  - o building and sustaining family-teacher partnerships in virtual learning environments, family health, and wellness
- **Trainings and supports:** A variety of resources will made accessible including toolkits, at-home learning materials, webinars, in-person, and live trainings. In addition, to ensure that our most vulnerable families have access to information, the district will create digital media cards with tips and guidance on the digital learning environment for distribution at meal sites and in-person home visits.
- **School leader and school-based team trainings and supports:** Provide training and professional development for principals, teachers, and school-based teams on leveraging family input and feedback

(1) to build trusting relationships and sustain strong academic partnerships in virtual/ hybrid learning environments; (2) to monitor student engagement and performance in virtual learning to inform family dialogues and school level and individual family engagement strategies; and (3) to use evidence-based practices to design school-level engagement plans and strategies (e.g. virtual home visits, student-led conferences and in-person home visits, conferences or trainings) as needed.

Supports for educators will:

- o Equip staff with tools and resources to strengthen family engagement strategies
- o Allow staff to equip families with tools to support their children's academic achievement during in-person classes, virtual learning or in a hybrid model
- o Ensure staff ability to provide learning opportunities for families that align with instruction across all content areas and grade bands
- o Create learning opportunities to help families support social-emotional learning and student wholeness in any learning environment
- o Train staff in effectively and safely implementing standard operating procedures to safely engage families or students in-person learning as needed
- o Provide one-pagers with strategies to build home-school partnerships in in-person/ virtual/ hybrid learning environments
- o Share scripts for teachers to address frequently asked questions about hybrid/ virtual learning including monitoring their child's progress, technical questions, and meeting student's social emotional needs
- o Train staff in launching virtual Parent Networking Communities to connect parents who are supporting their children's school learning experience - particularly connecting parents who are new to school communities and have students in transition grades
- o Hold in-person or virtual office hours for staff and teachers on how to coach and provide guidance to families around supporting their child's virtual learning experience including logging on, accessing online resources, completing online assignments, getting help, and monitoring their children's progress
- o Create a dedicated page on the district's website for families, staff, and community-partners to share information about family engagement resources and best-practices for sustaining home-school partnerships. The page will include webinars, tip-sheets, and content for families that help them support in-person, virtual/ hybrid learning.

- **Technology support hotline:** The district will offer a hotline for technology support to help address questions, issues, and concerns for parents and families.

### **Virtual Back-to-School Events**

The district/schools will host a virtual district-wide back-to-school event. This family learning opportunity will include information about academic, at-home learning supports, family literacy, social and emotional and family wholeness, and community-based resources.

- **Back-to-School Learning Materials:** The district will develop and distribute a "Back-to-School" packet for families that orients them to district and school level information. The packet will include literacy materials, information on how parents can access academic and learning supports, community-based resources, how to stay engaged and connected during a virtual learning period, and beyond. Packets will be available to all families across the district's meal sites and will also be mailed to families that cannot access meal sites. A digital version of the kit will be made available on the district's website and social media platforms for all families to access.

- **School-Based Back-to-School Events:** All schools will host an annual meeting/back-to-school event to welcome families and share important information about academic priorities. To ensure targeted supports are offered at the school-level; schools will provide webinars, guidance, trainings on use of standard operating procedures, and technical assistance for school-level virtual and in-person Back-to-School Nights, Open Houses, and family academic activities. Focus areas will include policy overviews on topics such as: attendance and grading, targeted programming for special education, multilingual supports, programming for early learners, training on curricular programs, etc.

### **Building Community Connections**

The district's partnership strategy will enable district and school staff to meet the diverse needs of students by leveraging external resources and supports and by ensuring partners have what they need to effectively connect their resources and supports to the district and schools to benefit students, schools, and communities. District staff will work with key community stakeholders to build awareness of district and school level priorities and to hear ideas and/or gather feedback from the community through the use of P-16 councils, PTAs, Table talks, etc.

Plan and coordinate virtual school events such as Back to School Nights, family meetings, town halls, and resource fairs with school staff and partners. When guidelines are available for in person gatherings of 25 or more, safe, in-person events and activities will be planned.

- Updates to the community on school plans will be routinely provided
- Quarterly In-person and/or virtual celebrations and incentives held jointly with family and community stakeholders will be held to promote student attendance
- Collaboration with partners to provide activities such as field trips, college information sessions, and other enrichment activities.

## **Communications**

The district and schools will continue to proactively share accurate and timely information with its key audiences regarding health and safety, access to social supports, and the delivery of effective instruction to students while also providing clarity of actions and expectations for our families. Such measures are necessary to support increased student achievement, organizational excellence, and ensure our key audiences are aware of district decisions, actions, or information.

Our communications are and will be rooted in the following four key messages that are closely associated with the principles we used to develop our safe return to in-person school plan. A primary objective is to share

these key messages consistently across the district's primary audiences – students, families, staff members, and collections of community influencers and leaders. The district/schools will

- always make decisions that support the health and safety of students, staff, and families
- be inclusive and transparent with students, families, staff members, and the community
- provide supports needed for students and staff members to engage in all learning environments
- with the help of community partners, the district/schools will provide families with assistance during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond

### **Examples of how the district will communicate with employees:**

- **Inside Scoop newsletter:** A newsletter for employees with current events and updates; including vital or time-sensitive matters
- **Weekly email:** An email blast that highlights the positive outcomes and achievements of employees

- Automated phone calls, and employee emails to share regular updates to all employees,
- School Leader Updates email: Daily communications with principals to share updates and resources

**Examples of how the district/schools will communicate with students and families:**

- **Webpage:** Dedicated webpages for our students, parents/ guardians, and families to share updates and resources
- **Automated phone calls and emails:** Weekly communications to families with key updates, including high priority or time-sensitive items
- **Mobile Application:** Encourage the use of mobile applications as tools to access information on the-go, which will be relaunched this fall and updated regularly
- **Virtual events:** Host regular events to share important updates and get feedback
- Multilingual families will continue to receive support, updated information, and resources in the most frequently spoken home languages.

**Examples of how the district will communicate with stakeholders:**

- **Newsletter:** Newsletters sent to vital stakeholder groups with current updates
- **Media highlights:** Regular media pitching of positive coverage and informational opportunities
- **Student highlights:** Publication of student achievements and events

## **Technology**

The district recognizes that many of our students may require access to computers and internet to participate fully in teaching and learning activities, and has worked diligently to provide all students access to devices, connectivity, and platforms that enable them to build the capacity to be able to shift between in-person instruction and virtual learning models as needed.

**Devices:** As we head into the school year, the district will leverage school sites as places where students and families can secure technology, such as Chrome books, tablets and hotspots, to support student access to a variety of learning environments for the fall.

Through school-based distribution of devices, the district has distributed over 1100 Chromebooks and tablets to traditional school students. As the start of the new school year approaches, the district will resume school-based distribution of devices to ensure that every student who needs a device can access one.

Connectivity: The district will use a multi-pronged strategy to enable internet access for families:

1. First, we will encourage families who need broadband access to sign up for programs/internet service providers that provide free internet for the initial months of service and a reduce price bill for all families with children in the district.
2. Second, the district will secure hotspots and began distributing them to district families in need who attend district schools

Platforms. Although the goal for the new school year will be to provide students with in-school instruction, the district aims to be able to deliver high-quality instruction seamlessly to all students across any learning environment that may have to be utilized during the year –virtual, hybrid, and/or in-person learning.

Valuable lessons have been learned through the COVID-19 pandemic, and after review of these experiences and community feedback, the district will leverage existing and new platforms, including the following, to allow students to experience virtual learning in a standardized and consistent manner.

Platform Description and Justification	Platform Description and Justification
Google Classroom	Google Classroom is a blended learning platform designed to help students and teachers communicate, collaborate, organize, and manage assignments. It is designed to be used on Chromebooks and is familiar to students and staff
Clever	Clever is an online service that securely integrates all education technology tools with a single log-in for all online programs and resources for access by teachers and students.

### Technology Training and Support

In order for our staff and families to succeed in a virtual learning environment or for use as asynchronous tools in an in-person environment, it is critical that staff receive the necessary tools, resources, training, and support around associated platforms and ways of working to deliver high-quality instruction and successfully support their students.

The district will prepare staff to facilitate virtual (in-person or remote) learning by:

- providing devices to support teachers who require a device to deliver virtual instruction and who are not interested in utilizing their own device. Instructional staff should reach out to their principals if they need a device.
- Providing training and professional development, both before the start of the school year, and during the school year on key topics such as technology platforms, best practices in virtual learning, etc.

The district will provide increased supports for families by:

- Helping parents and students navigate virtual spaces and learning environments
- Providing training on new equipment, technology platforms, etc.
- Helping to troubleshoot and solve technical difficulties critical to the success of our students

