

REOPENING SCHOOLS PLAN

SCHOOL YEAR 2020-21 | REVISED 11/13/2020



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Introduction to the Reopening Schools Plan

On June 9, Governor Northam announced a [phased reopening for Virginia public schools](#) outlining 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 operational 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.
 - a. Prioritize safety in decision-making.
 - b. Provide explicit health and safety protocols.
2. Provide family choice in student learning format (full-time online learning for the year or in-person instruction, as available, through the FCPS operational levels).
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 and transition to in-person instruction.
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 school year.

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.

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.

Elementary: Minimum of 2.5 hours of learning, with an average of 2 hours in the core academic disciplines of language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies.

Middle and High: Minimum of 5 hours and 20 minutes of learning, with an average of 4 hours in the core academic disciplines of English, mathematics, science, and social studies.

Tuesday-Friday: Four days weekly of teacher-directed interactive (synchronous) instruction, with the format defined by family choices and operational conditions.

Elementary: Minimum of 5 hours and 20 minutes of learning, with an average of 4 hours and 20 minutes per day in the core academic disciplines of language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies.





Middle and High: Minimum of 5 hours and 20 minutes of learning, with an average of 3 hours and 7 minutes per day in the core academic disciplines of English, mathematics, science, and social studies.

Due to the shift to the start of the school year and the need for a schedule that provides flexibility to adjust the instructional delivery model throughout the year as health and operational conditions dictate, FCPS will not meet the normal requirements for the length of the school term or average length of the school day. FCPS will utilize flexibility offered from the Virginia Department of Education this year, with approximately 172 total instructional days, approximately 826 total instructional hours at elementary school, and approximately 905 total instructional hours at middle and high school. FCPS will meet the required time allocations for instruction supporting the four academic disciplines of English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies, with a minimum of 680 hours at elementary school and a minimum of 560 hours at middle school.

FCPS Operational Approach (Continued)

Operational Levels

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 FCPS operational levels are 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.

FCPS OPERATIONAL LEVELS	
	<p>Level 1: 100 Percent Virtual Learning All learning is virtual; no in-person learning opportunities Limited personnel reporting to offices and schools Limited or no in-person transitions with the public inside FCPS facilities</p>
	<p>Level 2: Cohort Learning Identified cohort groups of students are phased in for in-person intervention and supports; in-person cohorts may run on Mondays only or one or more days, Tuesday to Friday Most students continue 100 percent virtual learning Staff members may access classrooms to deliver instruction, with administrator permission</p>
	<p>Level 3: Hybrid Learning Hybrid of online and socially distanced instruction at school for all students whose families want in-person learning Some teachers continue to teach remotely based on health needs and student enrollment needs Students whose families chose full-time online instruction remain online for the year</p>
	<p>Level 4: 100 Percent In-Person Learning All students have the opportunity for in-person learning Schools open at full capacity with sustained health mitigation strategies Some students and staff may continue online due to family choice or membership in a COVID-19 high risk category</p>

Dialing In and Dialing Out

At the heart of the FCPS model 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. A chapter on health mitigation strategies describes their application in FCPS:

- Consistent and correct use of masks or face coverings
- Social distancing to the largest extent possible
- Hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette
- Cleaning and disinfection
- Contact tracing in collaboration with the local health department

When dialing in on the operational levels, opportunities for in-person instruction begins at Level 2 with cohorts of the most vulnerable students, such as English learners, students with disabilities, and primary grade students. Throughout operational levels 2-3, FCPS employs a concurrent instructional model, as described in the section below. In-person learning for all students at Level 4 is only offered when public health data trends and developments reflect that all significant risk of COVID-19 resurgence has passed.

FCPS Operational Approach (Continued)

The chapter on the in-person instruction model provides additional details about instructional delivery and services at each operational level. Note that the operational levels apply only to students whose families select in-person instruction for the school year. Students whose families elect online instruction can expect consistent full-time online instruction for the entire school year.

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 opened the school year in Operational Level 1, with virtual learning for all. This change meant 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.

Under Operational Level 1, 100 percent virtual learning, 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 ensures FCPS students are able to access high-quality, rigorous instruction in this temporary model and across all operational levels throughout the year. FCPS provides additional professional development for staff and resources for families to prepare for a successful start to the school year under a model of 100 percent virtual learning.

FCPS leadership is actively forming plans to transition to Operational Level 2, cohort learning, as soon as possible in the fall to resume limited in-person assessment and to begin inviting prioritized students groups to access part-time in-person academic and social-emotional supports.

Concurrent Instructional Model

To maximize teacher-directed instructional time across operational levels and staffing structures, FCPS is using a concurrent instructional model Tuesday through Friday. Concurrent instruction is a model in which teachers support learning for students who are attending in-person in the classroom as well as those who are attending virtually. During operational levels 2-3, each student whose family has elected the in-person operational continuum receives 2 days per week with the teacher at school and 2 days per week of synchronous online teacher support. Within the concurrent instruction model, teachers are responsible for direct support to all their assigned students every day, with some support delivered in-person and some support delivered virtually. Mondays are reserved for independent asynchronous student work and teacher preparation.

A model in which instruction is accessed concurrently by students in-school and at-home





FCPS Operational Approach (Continued)

The concurrent instructional model is designed to provide stability for student and staff schedules when the division transitions between operational levels throughout the school year. While the frequency of in-person learning will shift with the operational level at any given time, students can consistently expect 4 days weekly of teacher-directed learning via online and/or in-person services. The model allows in-person students to maintain pace with students whose parents elect to remain full-time online for the year. Additionally, it allows teachers to plan just one differentiated lesson per daily class period, rather than needing to prepare separate independent tasks for days when students' schedules have them attending virtually.

Specialized professional learning is designed to assist teachers in adjusting classroom management structures, strengthening social-emotional learning skills and relationships, enhancing differentiated instructional techniques, leveraging co-teaching and collaboration practices, and providing meaningful feedback. Technology upgrades have increased internet bandwidth within schools, provided classroom cameras to enhance engagement for online learners, and created audio/visual classroom technology bundles.

Family Choices

Within the FCPS model, families have a choice between two options to meet their children's educational needs. This choice becomes active for families as the division begins dialing in to Operational Level 2 through Level 4, to provide in-person instruction with social distancing in FCPS school buildings.

COMPARISON OF FAMILY CHOICES FOR 2020-21		
OPTION	 FULL-TIME ONLINE INSTRUCTION	 IN-PERSON OPERATIONAL 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 Operational Level 1, 100 percent virtual learning, in the worst case to up to Operational Level 4, 100 percent in-person learning 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 operational levels 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, FCPS is prepared to rapidly adjust its operational level, as needed, to respond to specific cases of infection and exposure within a particular class, school, or the broader county and region. Division leaders communicate promptly to staff, students, and families in the event that local health conditions warrant school closure or a change in instructional delivery.

Through close consultation with the local health department, FCPS has adopted multi-faceted metrics to measure when the division can safely provide in-person instruction. These metrics inform decisions on dialing in or dialing out the operational level for the division overall as well as for individual schools and classrooms, as needed. Three types of metrics provide context for operational decisions. Metric thresholds for each operational level are refined to inform decisions about dialing in, maintaining, and dialing out.

Community Transmission and Disease Trends: Defined by Virginia Department of Health, reviewed weekly with the Fairfax County Health Department, and used to determine if the level of community transmission *allows* 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.

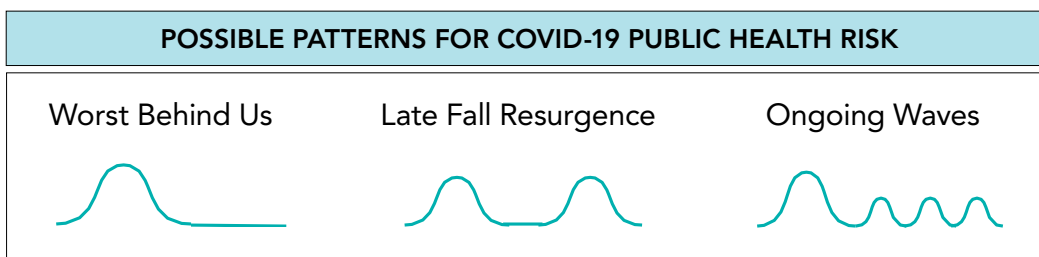
Operational staffing metrics reflect availability of classroom teachers, health room staff, in-person monitors, administrative staff, food and nutrition managers, transportation staff, and custodial staff.

Operational facilities metrics reflect adequate availability of personal protective equipment and supplies for cleaning and sanitizing.

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 (operational level 1) for one or more FCPS sites, no students would be allowed in school buildings for instruction. 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. The FCPS metrics for school operational decisions equip the division to respond rapidly and appropriately to any future scenario of elevated risk.



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 helps to create an infrastructure aligned to student, family, and staff needs. Documenting the successes and missteps in the [spring 2020 distance learning](#) implementation informs 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. FCPS practices meet or exceed the guidelines below.

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 masks as an alternative;
- Physical distance on school buses; use of masks 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 masks 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. The FCPS family choices for full time online or in-person learning provides families flexibility to exercise precaution if their student is potentially at risk. FCPS also provides accommodations staff who meet Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) criteria, including full-time telework options in some cases. ADA accommodations are available for teachers and non-teaching personnel who have a documented need for extra COVID-19 precautions due to medical risk.. FCPS screening, health, and safety measures further offer precautions for e students and staff who attend in-person at an FCPS site for school or work.

Health Screening and Temperature Checks

FCPS implements [daily health screening practices](#) for students, staff, and visitors. FCPS continues to partner with the FCHD to refine protocols for daily screening, reporting, and monitoring for 2020-21. A public information campaign reinforces the importance of staying home for any individual who is sick. Parents and guardians must agree to a [health screening commitment](#) before their students may return for in-person services. Staff are required to complete daily self-reporting to verify they are asymptomatic when reporting to the worksite. Staff screen students that report symptoms upon arrival or whose caregiver did not complete the daily health screening. Temperature checks are used throughout the day as a tool to assess students' health conditions. The frequency of temperature checks is defined by operational level. Temporal thermometers are distributed to each school and school bus.

Contact Tracing and Responding to Illness

FCPS and FCHD have developed protocols for responding to illness among 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 are moved to a care room for monitoring until they can be safely transported for testing and treatment. Specific criteria for determining when a student may return to school after illness are included in the [FCPS student health and safety guidance document](#).

Student and Community Health Monitoring

At an individual student level, FCPS actively monitors 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. [A FCPS COVID-19 case reporting dashboard](#) gives daily reported case history overall and by site.

At a community level, FCPS regularly communicates and monitors 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 consults 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 school, division leaders transition the school to operational level 1, 100 percent virtual learning until investigations of contract tracing indicate it is safe to resume the previous operational level. At the classroom level, one confirmed case of COVID-19 triggers a shift for that classroom to operational level 1, 100 percent virtual learning, for 14 days from onset, unless contact investigation and tracing require a different duration.

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. The FCPS operational metrics monitor these health data in combination with operational metrics to ensure the ability to fully meet all health and safety guidelines for in-person services. VDH thresholds for community transmission metrics together with FCPS thresholds for operational metrics inform data-based decisions about dialing in and dialing out of division operational level. Likewise, school metrics and thresholds ensure decision-making protocols are sensitive enough to promptly respond to individual classroom or school risks. See the chapter on preparing for future closures for additional information on the division 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 and Respiratory Etiquette

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.

Masks and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

FCPS has established a new [regulation](#) requiring that all staff, visitors, and students over age two wear masks or face coverings while inside FCPS facilities and while using FCPS-provided transportation. Masks may be cloth or disposable and are provided for individuals who are unable to provide their own. Exceptions to this requirement include:

- While individuals are eating, drinking, or exercising, under the direction of school staff;

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

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

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

Physical and Social Distancing

FCPS staff 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. Strategic efforts are used across FCPS settings to ensure 6-foot social distancing is maintained, whenever possible. Staff maintain small groups by having students eat meals in classrooms whenever possible and limiting volunteers and visitors in the building. Additionally, staff use strategies to minimize mixing between groups whenever possible. Specific practices are being 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 ensure the physical spaces, equipment, and materials students and staff come into contact with remain safe. Daily sanitizing is implemented for high touch areas (doorknobs, handles, fixtures, etc.) with a medical grade sanitizing solution. Restrooms are monitored and cleaned more frequently throughout the day. Water fountains are used only for refilling water bottles; staff and students may not drink directly from fountains. Students bring their own refillable water bottles for use during the school day. Outside cleaning services are contracted, as needed.

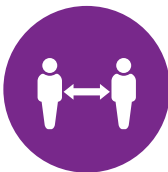
Students maintain their own personal set of labeled classroom supplies, such as manipulatives, calculator, journal, etc. Students use personally-assigned laptops or tablets for digital learning within the classroom. When it is not possible to assign individual supplies, sanitizing protocols are applied between uses. Library books and other paper supplies must sit for seven days before reuse. Playground equipment such as jungle gyms and swings are not used. Playground supplies, such as jump ropes, hula hoops, and balls, are assigned to each classroom for use by individual students, with sanitation between uses.

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 are implementing enhanced preventative maintenance on all mechanical, electrical, HVAC, and plumbing systems, including replacement of air filters. Additionally, staff conduct comprehensive 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 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. Volunteer access to facilities is limited, and all visitors are required to complete the daily health screening questionnaire.



Elements Present Across Operational Models

Some elements 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 have access to a personally assigned FCPS-provided laptop for use at home and at school. New and redeployed laptops are also available for elementary school students in grades PreK-6. With these enhancements, all students PreK-12 are 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 is to help staff identify students' learning needs and plan for upcoming instruction. Assessments geared to this purpose are 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 are 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 were canceled for 2020-21. Alternative data sources and methods are being used in some cases for instructional and programmatic decisions, when prior assessment data are not available. As in-person instruction resumes with operational levels 2-3, standardized assessments also resume with specific [health and safety assessment protocols](#). A new system of assessment by appointment has been 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 language proficiency exams.

Curriculum and Instruction

Recognizing learning 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. Additionally, [health and safety protocols](#) have been defined for specific curricular areas, including choral and instrumental music, dance and theatre arts, health and physical education, etc.

Professional learning is provided for teachers to prepare for changes to teaching practices that are necessary for online instruction and for concurrent instruction with social distancing for in-person students. 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 are published throughout the fall to assist staff in preparing to dial in for in-person concurrent 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 is sent to caregivers for any students 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 allows schools to document which students require an adjusted schedule for classes. Schools monitor attendance patterns for all students to plan for intervention or supports, as needed.

New instruction delivered in the 2020-21 school year is 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. This includes application of an honor code and resources to support use of a cumulative gradebook model at middle and high school to account for students attending on different schedules and with different instructional models throughout the year. Flexibility is also expanded for course decisions, such as choosing a pass/fail option.

Digital Resources

Whether learning takes place primarily in an online environment or face-to-face, expanded digital resources ensure students have consistent access to high quality learning tools. Staff 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 resources at the elementary and middle school levels 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 continues to 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, concurrent, or online only. Instructional staff 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 offer another critical layer of support for students, families, and staff. Specific strategies 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 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 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 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 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, 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 are given special consideration to ensure appropriate instruction while complying with federal and state requirements. Under the operational levels for in-person instruction, students from these special populations are offered cohort learning under level 2 before 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 include increased time for synchronous instruction and explicit expectations for greater consistency. Instructional delivery is designed to ensure the least restrictive environment (LRE) as required by their IEP. As needed based on IEP goals, this includes in-person specialized instruction. Students continue to receive access to instructional materials for use at home, as needed, including assistive technology tools. The student support model is complemented by enhanced professional development for staff and training for caregivers. When necessary, virtual meetings are used to convene special education procedural meetings, such as local screening committee, reevaluation, eligibility, IEP teams, etc. Descriptions of the 2020-21 FCPS [service models to support students with disabilities](#) are available.

Under Operational Level 2 cohort learning, students accessing an adapted curriculum and those attending FCPS public day schools receive up to four days per week of in-person learning at school, unless their families have opted for full-time online instruction. As the division transitions to cohort learning, Temporary Learning Plans are discontinued, and teams work to amend IEP goals, accommodations, and services, as appropriate, to reflect the student's instructional delivery model for 2020-21, whether in-person or online.

English Learners (ELs)

ESOL services for English learners include a defined minimum time allocation for English language development (ELD) instruction within the student's schedule. Additional opportunities for extended instructional time are provided to recently arrived ELs, students with limited or interrupted formal education (SLIFE), and ELs identified for interventions. Students from these same EL groups have access to in-person learning opportunities under operational level 2 cohort learning, unless their families have opted for full-time online instruction. The amount of in-person cohort learning varies by student need and school operational capacity.

Formative ELD assessments have been created to assist monitoring of student progress in development of reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills. Bilingual counseling, social work services, and psychology services are available to support students' social-emotional needs and academic advising. Family outreach and education are 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, the operational levels are designed with the overarching aim to provide safe in-person learning for all FCPS students. The operational levels adapt 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. For students whose families choose the in-person operational continuum, service is provided at different operational levels, as described in the section below, ranging from the most restrictive Level 1, 100 percent virtual learning, to the least restrictive Level 4, 100 percent in-person learning. Across all operational levels, the concurrent instructional model ensures students receive consistent access to teacher-directed learning 4 days per week. A posted [timeline](#) outlines the division’s actual and planned implementation of the in-person operational continuum in 2020-21.

Instruction Within the Operational Levels





The 5-day instructional week provides guaranteed services for students by level. [Sample daily schedules](#) provide a snapshot of how instructional content is delivered within the bell schedule. Actual schedules are established at each school according to division guidelines. As illustrated in the table below, FCPS students experience a range of learning models as the division dials in and out among operational levels.

Monday: Students access independent, asynchronous learning. Certain students may be identified to receive specialized services to meet program needs, such as IEP goals or assessment requirements. Students may also have opportunities to access extra-curricular activities, when available. Teachers engage in professional development and prepare for upcoming student instruction.

Tuesday-Friday: Students receive teacher-directed instruction 4 days weekly. Depending on the operational level and student group, students may be served in-person 0 to 4 days per week (see table below). On days for which a student is not scheduled to attend in-person, instruction is delivered synchronously online.

Elementary School: Students participate in all core academic classes daily. Specials classes vary by day, with weekly access to learning in art, music, and health and physical education.

Middle and High School: Students participate on a block schedule with odd-numbered class periods on Tuesday and Thursday and even-numbered class periods on Wednesday and Friday.

INSTRUCTION AT LEVELS 1 TO 4	
	<p>Level 1: 100 Percent Virtual Learning No in-person learning for students; all instruction is delivered online No in-person assessment or evaluation</p>
	<p>Level 2: Cohort Learning Some socially distanced in-person instruction for prioritized student groups (see examples of cohort learning groups in the section below) Most cohort groups attend in-person 2 days per week and receive 2 days of teacher-directed online learning Some cohort groups attend in-person 4 days per week No movement between classes or mixing between rooms</p>
	<p>Level 3: Hybrid Learning Socially distanced in-person instruction for all students Most students attend in-person 2 days per week and receive 2 days of teacher-directed online learning Some students who were part of a 4-day cohort group continue to attend in-person 4 days per week Some movement between classes and mixing between rooms, especially at the middle and high school levels</p>
	<p>Level 4: 100 Percent In-Person Learning All students access in-person learning at least 4 days per week</p>



Cohort Learning Groups

Operational level 2, cohort learning, is designed to safely serve students in-person on a limited basis to meet critical needs for instruction, assessment, and related services. Within operational level 2, the level of service provided varies based on division readiness metrics and student needs across schools. Three primary formats are used when implementing level 2 cohort learning, and these formats may be leveraged independently or together. All three formats have been applied in fall 2020.

Assessment and evaluation by appointment, including:

- Individual students based on need
- Groups of students for prioritized assessments, such as college entrance exams, abilities tests, and state-mandated assessments

Half-day Monday opportunities for cohorted groups of students to supplement virtual learning, including:

- Intervention/supports for students disconnected from virtual learning in the previous or current school year
- Students identified through the MTSS process needing additional academic or social-emotional supports
- Specialized high school courses that require in-person access to equipment and experiences

Small group in-person learning throughout the week for students likely to experience challenges with virtual learning, including:

- Students with disabilities: Preschool autism, preschool special education, private day schools, adapted curriculum, comprehensive services
- English learners: Students with limited or interrupted formal education, newcomer ELs
- Primary grade students: PreK-K, grades 1-2
- Specialized courses requiring hands-on experiences: Behind the wheel, in-person requirements defined by external regulatory boards, content requiring hand-on learning, such as career and technical education

Schedules

The weekly schedules below illustrate how instruction is delivered under each level of the operational continuum. Decisions about bell schedules at each school and the assignments of which students attend school each day are confirmed for each operational level based on health data and stakeholder feedback. Individual student schedules for in-person learning at the school are communicated to families prior to any change in operational level.

Operational Level 1, 100 Percent Virtual Learning

All students receive teacher-directed online learning Tuesday through Friday. This is the operational level used to launch the 2020-21 school year.

ALL GRADES WEEKLY SCHEDULE FOR OPERATIONAL LEVEL 1, 100% VIRTUAL LEARNING				
GROUP	TUESDAY MS/HS PERIODS 1, 3, 5, 7	WEDNESDAY MS/HS PERIODS 2, 4, 6, 8	THURSDAY MS/HS PERIODS 1, 3, 5, 7	FRIDAY MS/HS PERIODS 2, 4, 6, 8
All Students	ONLINE	ONLINE	ONLINE	ONLINE

Operational Levels 2-3, Cohort and Hybrid Learning

Implementing operational levels 2-3 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 these operational levels, students are scheduled to attend school in-person on specific days. Students in identified groups receive in-person learning 2-4 days per week.

In general, 4 days of in-person instruction is reserved for special cohort groups reflecting certain students with disabilities, such as those attending public day schools.

In-Person Operational Continuum (Continued)



Most identified cohort and hybrid groups receive in-person instruction 2 days weekly, with roughly half of the students in each group assigned to attend school on Tuesday and Wednesday and the other half assigned to attend school on Thursday and Friday. Students not at school on a particular day join the class online.

Students in groups not yet identified for phase-in continue to receive 4 days of online learning.

Likewise students in classrooms or schools that must be temporarily closed due to confirmed COVID-19 cases will temporarily revert to 4 days of online learning until the health department clears them to resume in-person learning.

Note that certain course-based cohort groups, such as Firefighting and Residential Construction career preparation courses, may function on a modified schedule. For example, these cohort groups report in-person to their high school Academy 1-2 half-days weekly for specialized hands-on experiences that cannot be replicated virtually.

ALL GRADES WEEKLY SCHEDULE FOR OPERATIONAL LEVEL 2-3, COHORT AND HYBRID LEARNING				
GROUP	TUESDAY MS/HS PERIODS 1, 3, 5, 7	WEDNESDAY MS/HS PERIODS 2, 4, 6, 8	THURSDAY MS/HS PERIODS 1, 3, 5, 7	FRIDAY MS/HS PERIODS 2, 4, 6, 8
Special Cohort Groups	IN SCHOOL	IN SCHOOL	IN SCHOOL	IN SCHOOL
Identified Cohort/ Hybrid Groups	(Half A) IN SCHOOL (Half B) ONLINE	(Half A) IN SCHOOL (Half B) ONLINE	(Half A) ONLINE (Half B) IN SCHOOL	(Half A) ONLINE (Half B) IN SCHOOL
Cohort/Hybrid Groups Not Identified	ONLINE	ONLINE	ONLINE	ONLINE
Classrooms/Schools Temporarily Closed Due to COVID-19	ONLINE	ONLINE	ONLINE	ONLINE
Specialized Career Preparation Courses	IN SCHOOL (Scheduled for 1-2 half-days in-school, reporting to a high school academy)			

Operational Level 4, 100 Percent In-Person Learning

All students receive in-person learning Tuesday through Friday, as classroom and school health metrics permit. Students continue to participate independently online on Mondays for the remainder of 2020-21.

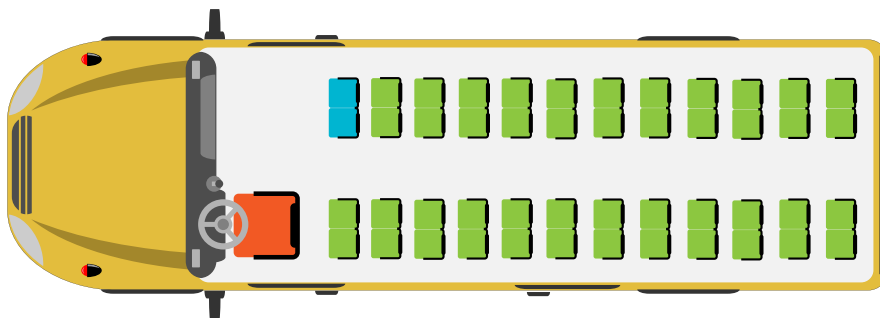
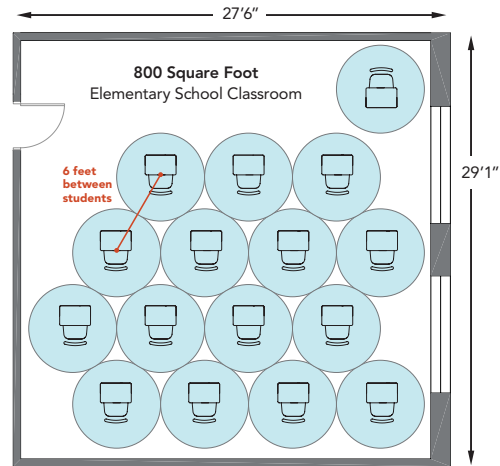
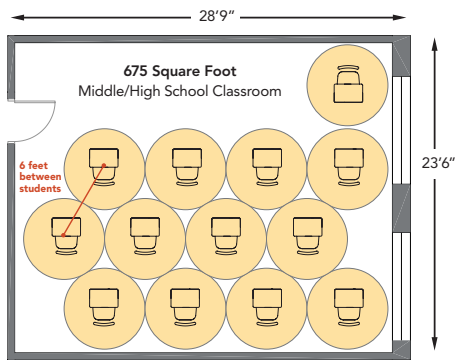
ALL GRADES WEEKLY SCHEDULE FOR OPERATIONAL LEVEL 4, 100 PERCENT IN-PERSON LEARNING				
GROUP	TUESDAY MS/HS PERIODS 1, 3, 5, 7	WEDNESDAY MS/HS PERIODS 2, 4, 6, 8	THURSDAY MS/HS PERIODS 1, 3, 5, 7	FRIDAY MS/HS PERIODS 2, 4, 6, 8
All Students Not Affected by Closures	IN SCHOOL	IN SCHOOL	IN SCHOOL	IN SCHOOL
Classrooms/Schools Temporarily Closed Due to COVID-19	ONLINE	ONLINE	ONLINE	ONLINE




Health Protocols and Social Distancing

In-person instruction within the FCPS model requires continuous monitoring and safety measures to mitigate health risk. All health monitoring protocols and social distancing are implemented in accordance with CDC and VDH guidance, as detailed in the chapter on health mitigation strategies. This includes required use of masks, daily health screening questions, frequent sanitation of high-touch points, and visitor restrictions. Six-foot separation is maintained whenever possible for both staff and students, with new capacity limits and seating guidelines for classrooms and school buses. In rare cases when 6-foot distancing cannot be attained, additional mitigation strategies are employed, such as staff use of PPE to protect students requiring close interaction for special education services.

Customized health mitigation strategies may be established to address periods of potential increased transmission risk, such as during the initial phase-in for new student groups under operational levels 2-3. Such customized expectations are highlighted within the [student health and safety guidance document](#) and in staff and family communication. One example of such a customized strategy is a requirement to check all students' temperatures before they may enter the school building.



 1 student passenger per seat

 Drivers Child

77 PASSENGER BUS
UP TO 23 STUDENT PASSENGERS



As noted in the chapter on the FCPS operational approach for 2020-21, FCPS is providing families two options for instructional format this school year. 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. With the virtual start for all students, family choices were not applied at the beginning of the school year. However, family choice becomes relevant with implementation of in-person learning opportunities. As cohort and hybrid groups prepare to phase in under operational levels 2-3, families of affected students grade levels are offered the opportunity to update their choice between full-time online instruction for the year and in-person instruction based on the operational continuum.

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 operational Level 4, 100 percent in-person learning, the division will consider what additional choices may be offered to families at that time.

Schedules

The full-time online instructional model involves independent online learning each Monday and teacher-directed synchronous online instruction Tuesday through Friday. Full-time online students access instruction on the same schedule as used under operational level 1, 100 percent virtual learning. [Sample daily schedules](#) provide a snapshot of how instructional content is delivered within the “bell schedule.” Actual schedules are established at each school according to division guidelines and align with schedules for the in-person operational continuum.

ALL GRADES WEEKLY SCHEDULE FOR FULL-TIME ONLINE INSTRUCTION				
GROUP	TUESDAY MS/HS PERIODS 1, 3, 5, 7	WEDNESDAY MS/HS PERIODS 2, 4, 6, 8	THURSDAY MS/HS PERIODS 1, 3, 5, 7	FRIDAY MS/HS PERIODS 2, 4, 6, 8
All Students Electing Full-Time Online	ONLINE	ONLINE	ONLINE	ONLINE

To the extent possible, students are served by teachers from their enrolled school. In many cases, full-time online students are placed in special class sections together with other full-time online students. However, in some cases, full-time online students may be served through the concurrent instructional model together with students participating under the in-person operational continuum. Under this scenario, full-time online students would continue to engage virtually each day, while their classmates may rotate through some in-person and some online days every week. Slide 38 of the [October 15, 2020, School Board work session](#) presentation provides an example of how a full-time online student might engage alongside their in-person continuum counterparts under a concurrent instructional model.

While most full-time online courses will be delivered through teacher-led instruction, just like in a regular in-person classroom, some full-time online courses may be taught using online courseware and digital curriculum resources to supplement teacher-directed instruction and support. Examples of online courseware and digital curriculum resources include Online Campus, Virtual Virginia, and Edmentum. Students participating in the full-time online model may have larger class sizes than their peers taking the same course under the in-person operational levels.

Family Understandings and Commitments

Families of full-time online students should be prepared to support their children’s active participation in all online learning activities. Caregivers should be prepared to:

- Ensure their students have adequate space, materials, and technology access for their daily online instructional activities;
- Support their students in following the established daily learning schedule; and
- Work with school staff to arrange for their students 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. Families may request school assistance to provide students with a laptop and internet service, as needed.

Additional Considerations for Reopening

As the division prepares for reopening schools, we recognize that 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;
- Support applying for and negotiating ADA accommodations;
- Opportunity to request a full-time online teaching assignment, with placement contingent on student enrollment numbers in the full-time online program and tiering by need; and
- Flexibility to resign, retire, or apply for unpaid leave of absence (LOA) without prejudice.

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

When a staff member who directly serves students in FCPS schools is required to return in-person to support cohort or hybrid learning in operational levels 2-3, they may request 4 days of in-school service (Tuesday-Friday) for their children enrolled in FCPS grades K-6. On Mondays, the staff member may take school-aged children with them to their school of employment, so long as the student is able to work with limited supervision and the arrangement does not impact the employee's ability to perform his or her work duties. Examples of staff eligible for this option include teachers, instructional assistants, administrative staff, custodians, cafeteria workers, bus drivers, school psychologists, 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. A [Family Guide for Return to School](#) provides key timelines and summarizes critical information for caregivers as they plan for students resuming in-person instruction. 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 operational 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 is automatically enrolled for the in-person operational levels.

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. Additional [technology information and supports](#) are also available for families.

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 follows 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 is applied throughout reopening. Additional details are found within the [activities and athletics webpage](#).

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 have been 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. Appropriate protocols and proper accommodations are available to allow clubs to remain active.

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

The marching band season has been postponed until later in the school year. Schools 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 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 are used to inform the development and refinement of implementation plans for the two operational models. Survey data 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 and Actions

All decisions and actions are led by the Fairfax County School Board and senior leadership team. Decisions and actions are based on the most recent public health data and guidance from the CDC as well as state and county health department. FCPS utilizes 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. [Return to School Updates](#) give a complete timeline of School Board meetings, town hall meetings, newsletter publications, and messages from the superintendent.



By June 26, 2020

Communicate an initial decision on the operational models 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 enables 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 operational 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 operational level may be dialed in.

By August 17, 2020

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

By September 2, 2020

Communicate individual student schedules and teacher/course assignments.

By October 14, 2020

Communicate updates on FCPS operational levels, FCPS in-person readiness metrics, tentative phase-in schedules for operational level 2 cohort learning, and the concurrent instructional model.

By October 26, 2020

Begin cohort learning for select English learners, career preparation classes, and students with disabilities served through a classroom-based adapted curriculum, comprehensive services site, or FCPS public day school.

By November 16, 2020

Begin grade-level cohort learning for Early Head Start, prekindergarten, and kindergarten.

Expand cohort learning for additional students with disabilities receiving at least 50 percent modified curriculum or specialized center-based services, such as vision programs and deaf/hard-of-hearing programs.

Tentative dates for further phase-in of operational level 2 and operational level 3 groups are posted and updated as dictated by FCPS readiness metrics.