Return to School Considerations

Fall 2020
Essential Starting Points

• Our primary goal must be to ensure a safe learning and work environment for students and employees.
• Local public health recommendations and state guidance will inform school reopening plans and timelines.
• Equity of access to technology and internet at home for all students are necessary.
• Well-being of students and staff must start with a robust Tiered System of Support.
• Expectations must include flexibility in support to students, families, and employees in higher risk categories for infection.
• Consistent expectations across schools start with strong communication and community engagement throughout the planning process.
Overall Considerations

• Virginia Department of Education guidance anticipated in early June to address key areas:
  • Date(s) and conditions for lifting school closures
  • Use of CARES Act funding
  • Reopening planning scenarios
• Timing of health metrics will continue to be interdependent with National Capital Region counties.
• Containment strategies use a model of increased testing, isolation and quarantine, and contact tracing.
• Modeling suggests an increase in infection over the summer.
Health and Safety Considerations

• Augmented sanitization routines will cause an increase in use of disinfectant and associated protective equipment.

• Maintaining six-foot distance requirements within classrooms will significantly impact classroom and school capacities, requiring potential adjustments in school schedules and routines.

• Increased daily health screening and internal contact tracing will impact school staffing and supply inventories.

• Flexibility with employee sick leave may result in increased substitute costs.
Instructional Considerations

• Modify instructional delivery models to prepare for effective distance learning at any time
• Revise PreK-12 curriculum and pacing to embed essential content and skills missed during the 4\textsuperscript{th}-quarter
• Ensure special education students receive necessary service levels
• Ensure appropriate social-emotional learning (SEL) supports for students
• Use targeted interventions (via ATSS) to respond to heightened student academic, social-emotional, and behavioral needs
• Pursue accreditation waivers to allow teachers and administrators to put student needs first
Technology Considerations

• Continue to enhance technology infrastructure and services to effectively support teaching, learning and operational needs
• Ensure every student has an appropriate 1:1 device and connectivity at home for online learning
• Continue to partner with Arlington County to expand internet access to students in need (e.g., $500,000 Comcast Internet Essentials Grant)
• Evaluate current digital curriculum tools and usage to identify gaps and opportunities to improve online learning
Summer
• Summer learning programs will be offered virtually.

• Food distribution will continue to support our students through the summer.

• School-based social services for our vulnerable students will continue.
Planning Scenarios
Scenario 1: Distance Learning

In this scenario:

• The 2020-21 SY would begin on August 31 with **distance learning only**, with planning factors in place for beginning to reopen school and resuming in-person instruction when conditions are met.

• Meal distribution and social services would continue with current safety and social distancing procedures.

• This scenario is very probable and has significant equity and access implications.
Planning for Distance Learning

Focus on:

• Building virtual classroom and school communities
• Synchronous instruction
• Introduction of new content
• Increased recommended maximum time limits
• Embedded social-emotional learning
• Best practices related to distance learning
Scenario 2: In-Person and Online Instruction (Hybrid)

In this scenario:

• The 2020-21 SY would begin on August 31 with class size limits and social distancing per public health recommendations.

• This scenario may be achieved by staggering in-person and virtual instruction in small groups.

• This scenario is very probable and has significant budget and operational impacts.
Focus on:

- Implementing alternating day schedules (in-school, virtual) based on health department guidelines
- Depending on social distancing requirements, building plan to serve students who most require in-person instruction and supports (e.g., based on IEP, EL level or developmental level)
- Creating non-classroom-space guidelines and procedures (e.g., restrooms, cafeteria, hallways, library, playground, bus, etc.)
- Expanding community partnerships and leveraging volunteer network to support students with distance learning
In this scenario:

- 2020-21 SY would begin on August 31 with limited-to-no public health recommendations or social distancing requirements.

- This scenario is the least likely of the three options.
Supporting Students and Staff

Innovative solutions and flexibility are needed, in scenarios 2 or 3, to support students and staff who are unable to return to buildings for medical or other reasons.

Solutions for students may include:

High School
• Enrollment in Online Campus

Middle and Elementary
• Enrollment with an online provider (e.g., Virtual Virginia)
• Group students in online class sections
• Class sections mixed with both face-to-face and online students

Solutions for staff may include:
• Staff working with their health care provider and Human Resources to review leave and accommodations.
• Human Resources working with staff to balance staff needs with supports needed for students and families.
Anticipated Impacts
• Increased training on personal protective measures will be required.
• Quarantine space separate from Clinic space for student(s) and employees will need to be created.
• There may be inconsistency in availability of supplies for disinfectant and personal protective equipment.
• Student, employee, and visitor contract tracing using Visitor Management will be a challenge in the current budget environment.
• Availability of public health nurses (i.e., School Health) may be impacted by prolonged pandemic needs.
• Social-emotional instructional content and mental health support will need to be significantly increased, for all grade levels.

• Arts Education, CTE, Athletics, Pre-K and Kindergarten—with shared equipment and supplies—will be disproportionately impacted by requirements for disinfecting and social distancing.

• PE classes will have to be redesigned

• There will probably need to be significant reduction in classroom size to accommodate physical distance requirements.
• Increased and specialized personal protective equipment will be needed for students and staff (e.g., MIPA, Functional Life Skills, Deaf and Hard of Hearing, etc.).

• Accommodations will be needed for audio enhancement equipment affected by the use of masks.

• In-person psychological assessments may be reduced or augmented in accordance with public health recommendations.
Transportation

- 6-foot social distance requirements will reduce bus capacities by approximately 75%.
- Increased disinfecting of bus surfaces will increase supply consumption and labor hours significantly.
- Field trip and athletic transportation will be eliminated or delayed due to reduced capacities.
- Increased staffing may be necessary to support busing schedules with reduced capacities, even with reduced school attendance.
• Hall management will be needed to achieve one-way walk-through for students, employees, and visitors.

• Cafeteria services may be reduced, if not eliminated, including an impact on preparation and food safety guidelines.

• Extended Day services will need augmentation to align with social distance requirements.

• Limitations are possible on recess, before and after school gatherings, sports practices and events, and other typical mass gatherings.
Extra-curricular Activities

• Music, Theater, CTE, Athletics, etc. with shared equipment and supplies will be disproportionately impacted by disinfecting requirements.

• There may be reduced revenue for schools from concessions and ticket sales.

• Increased personal protection equipment may be required for athletic team training.

• Additional cleaning and social distancing may be required for use of locker rooms.

• Competition and game participation with other schools and divisions may be affected.

• Athletic participation physical certifications may expire, pending VHSL decision on extension.

• Athletics programs may be delayed or cancelled, or otherwise adjusted, in compliance with health and sports official recommendations from the VHSL and elsewhere.
Professional Learning

Staff training and support is key component of 2020-21 planning, with focus on:

• Staff health, wellness and safety measures and adjusted school procedures based on public health guidance.

• Online, distance-learning best practices for synchronous instruction of new content and virtual student engagement.

• Mental health and social-emotional supports to help students readjust to new schedule structures and routines.

• Adjusting the pacing of instruction and new content delivery.
Planning Timeline and Community Engagement
Planning Timeline

**Mid April - May**
- Work Group established
- Initial planning framework established
- Scenario planning
- End of year and summer learning plans finalized

**June**
- State guidance issued for return to school
- Weekly planning and updates
- Community engagement
- Staff training and professional development
- Superintendent Town Halls

**Late June/July**
- Plans shared for broad community input
- Ongoing communications and community engagement
- Plan finalized
- Activities and Athletics Communication

**August**
- Plan implementation
- Communications for start of school
- Administrator and staff training and professional development
Potential Future Closure(s)
(If hybrid or in-person models are forced to close again)
APS will develop plans for transitioning into distance learning as necessary, including:

- Building routines using 1:1 devices and blended learning within daily instruction at all grade levels
- Continuing to emphasize personal hygiene and safety standards
- Enhancing a robust infrastructure for technology and device support
- Planning for activity and athletics interruptions