Planning for COVID-19 Scenarios
#ReadyTogether

Presented to the School Board of Loudoun County
April 28, 2020
Planning for Multiple COVID-19 Scenarios

**Scenario 1:** Reopen schools *without* significant physical distancing or other public health mitigation strategies

**Scenario 2:** Reopen schools *with* physical distancing and/or other public health mitigation strategies

**Scenario 3:** an extension of distance learning
3 scenarios have overlap

Considerations
1. The planning will be **modular**.
2. Each scenario may have some overlap with another. (Planning modules may be taken from one scenario and used in another.)
3. Modules may be taken and revised from one or more scenarios to face other variations of scenarios.
4. All 3 have some common conditions.
5. There could be a situation where all 3 come in to play over the course of a school year, so each scenario is equally important.
Condition-Based Decision-Making

- Decisions regarding when to reopen schools, how to reopen schools, and whether to extend distance learning will be **condition-based, not time-based**

- The decisions will be based on consideration of pre-defined, science-based trigger points articulated by public health officials as well as any binding directives from other authorities

- Decisions will **not be based on a fixed timeline**
Scenario 1
Reopen schools without significant physical distancing or other public health mitigation strategies

- Considers the needs and gaps resulting from and/or highlighted by the extended school closure, as well as anticipated realities, such as increased resource limitations

- Planning for the other scenarios will also address the needs and gaps, but in different ways
Scenario 2
Reopen schools with significant physical distancing or other public health mitigation strategies

- Considers the evolving recommendations of public health officials and suggestions regarding how to apply those recommendations
- Key instructional and operational assumptions will need to be considered for teaching and learning to occur within the parameters of the evolving recommendations of public health officials.
  - Assumptions regarding all students learning at school at the same time
  - Assumptions regarding student and teacher schedules
- Considers the needs and gaps resulting from and/or highlighted by the extended school closure, as well as anticipated realities, such as increased resource limitations
Scenario 3
Extension of Distance Learning

- Assumes an extension of distance learning without in-person teaching and learning, either right from the start of the 2020-2021 school year, or after a period of some version of in-person teaching
- Considers how current distance learning should evolve and shift
- Considers the needs and gaps resulting from and/or highlighted by the extended school closure, as well as anticipated realities, such as increased resource limitations
Four Stages of Planning

- Broad Indicators of Success: A Painting with Broad Brush Strokes
- More Detailed Indicators of Success: A Painting with More Detailed Brush Strokes, But Still Requiring Interpretation
- Actions for Success: A Painting that Evolves towards a Precise, Detailed Rendering
- “How-to” Manual for Success: Memos, budgets, procedures, regulations, and/or policies
In a sprint, a team must complete defined work in a short period of time and be ready for review.

The terms is associated with Scrum Agile methodology:
- Sprints usually last from one to four weeks.
- The next sprint starts as soon as the last one ends.
- The scope of work may be clarified or renegotiated.

Our planning draws inspiration from this concept without using the formal process.
Broad Indicators of Success
A Painting with Broad Brush Strokes

- Identify the key components of plans for COVID-19
- Provides a general understanding of success
- As Anthony Kim and Alexis Gonzalez-Black observe, this stage provides “directional clarity”: people enhance their understanding of our possible pathways forward
- Switching to a product development analogy, this stage identifies the attributes of a minimum viable response to COVID-19 scenarios
Key Components of COVID-19 Plans

We will ask several questions during this stage:

- What are the key components that plans for each COVID-19 scenario should have?
- If we developed plans for each scenario that addressed the following draft list of key components, would we be on the right track?
- What would we be missing?

1st Iteration of List of Key Components

1. **Wellness:** We promote the physical and social-emotional well-being of students and staff members.

2. **Deeper Learning:** We support students’ deeper learning of important content and competencies through individual learning pathways in order to cultivate the Loudoun County Profile of a Graduate.

3. **Culture:** We nurture the culture needed to thrive.

4. **Operations and Systems:** We organize our people, time, and resources for success, while creating and refining systems to support success.
More Detailed Indicators of Success
A Painting with More Detailed Brush Strokes

- In this stage, we further develop our indicators of success.
- We add statements to each of the four key components that describe actions we take to attain success for that component of success.
  - For example, the action statements might start with
    - “We implement…”
    - “We assess…”
    - “We support…”
    - “We engage…”
Examples of Action Statements

Some examples apply more to some scenarios than others.

1. **Wellness**
   a. We implement and revise physical distancing measures
   b. We teach social emotional learning lessons

2. **Deeper Learning**
   a. We assess student progress to understand the needs of students individually and collectively
   b. We support students in recovering from lost learning and in accelerating their learning

3. **Culture**
   a. We are a learning organization that seeks progress, not perfection
   b. We have a “whole person, whole life” focus

4. **Operations and Systems**
   a. We employ the human and physical resources needed to succeed i.e. supplies, staffing
   b. We effectively engage stakeholders
Actions for Success
A Painting that Evolves towards a Precise, Detailed Rendering

- Prototype responses evolve towards more comprehensive plans
- Planning includes job-alike teams and interdisciplinary teams
- Initial focus is on the highest priority action statements from the previous phase
- The initial prototypes will be simple, incomplete and imperfect but will generate additional iterative planning as part of what Anthony Kim and Alexis Gonzalez-Black refer to as “plan and evolve”
- Refine the prototypes with multiple, varying groups of stakeholders to get feedback
  - “in what ways are we on the right track?”
  - “what are we missing?”
- Still not quite a “how-to” manual
Aim for Safe Enough to Share over Consensus

- To plan for change, let’s get to “safe enough to share”
- “Safe enough to share” operates in sprints, so that we can test ideas, get data, and iterate and evolve the plan
- Consensus is a lowest common denominator approach to decision-making
- Getting people confident around knowns, assumptions, and opinion will help planning
“How to” Manual for Success

- To support the transition to implementation, planning will become more formal and comprehensive
- Sample artifacts of the transition include memos, budgets, procedures, regulations, and/or policies
- With incomplete and constantly changing information, drafting the perfect “how to” manual prior to implementation may be an elusive "search for the holy grail"
- Nonetheless, working to formalizing the plan is important
Sprint 1

- Pre-work with Cabinet on April 17 and with Senior Staff on April 23
- Commences April 28 and concludes May 8
- Includes the 45 members of Senior Staff (Superintendent, Chief of Staff, Assistant Superintendents, their direct reports, 8 representative Principals, and Director of Communication and Community Engagement)
- Focuses on first 2 stages of planning (Broad Indicators of Success & More Detailed Indicators of Success)
- Work products
  - 2nd iteration of the list of key components of success (Wellness, Deeper Learning, Culture, Operations and Systems)
  - 1st iteration of action statements tied to key components of success
  - A plan for sharing work products from Sprint 1
  - Identify desired work products for Sprint 2
  - Other TBD
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Stakeholder Engagement

- “The best designs come out of deep empathy. This means starting with people, first” observes EdElements
- Empathy helps us better understand existing behaviors, anticipated behaviors, needs, and expectations
- Stakeholder engagement will play a key role in driving the iterative development of the key components of success, the action statements associated with each indicator of success, the prototype plans, and the formalizing of the prototype plans
- Stakeholder engagement will focus on numerous work products
  - Key components of success
  - Action statements
  - Prototype Response Plans
Stakeholder Engagement
Sprint 1

During Sprint 1 (April 28 to May 8), we jump start the process of learning more regarding stakeholder perspectives, experiences, needs, and expectations through interviews and/or observations:

- Each member Senior Staff will interview a stakeholder and/or observe the stakeholder (same or different person)
- Interview questions will be designed to evoke specific stories that help the listener not only learn about what the partner does, but how they think and feel
  - Examples of question stems
    - Tell me about a time you . . .
    - Walk me through how you . . .
    - Share a story of . . .
    - What was your best/worst/craziest experience with . . .
- Observations might focus on synchronous distance learning, synchronous distance work, or commercial settings with physical distancing
Stakeholder Engagement
Sprint 2 and Beyond

- Increasing stakeholder engagement in future sprints
  - Some future work groups will include additional internal and external stakeholders
  - Stakeholders will play key roles refining prototypes
- Diverse stakeholders will be engaged
  - Employees in a variety of roles
  - Parents
  - Students
  - Existing Advisory Groups
  - School Board
  - Other community members
- School-level teams will consider the emerging division-wide playbook of COVID-19 responses to create their school-specific playbooks
Collaboration Beyond LCPS Stakeholders

- Combining our initiative in preparing for COVID-19 scenarios WITH collaboration beyond LCPS stakeholders
- Daily collaboration with County Staff
- Superintendent appointed to state-level planning teams allowing access to the latest resources and information
  - Virginia Department of Education Return to School Task Force
  - Virginia COVID-19 Pre-K through 20 Education Work Group
- Superintendent and County Administrator collaborating to initiate common planning among Northern Virginia Regional Commission member local governments and school divisions (Alexandria, Arlington, Falls Church, Fairfax, Loudoun, Manassas, Manassas Park, Prince William)
- National and global resources i.e. American Association of School Administrators, Digital Promise League of Innovative Schools
Highlighted Sources


The phrase “Ready Together” has been used in the context of disaster preparedness at least as early as 2018 by Transition United States.
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