



Overview

The Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) Continuity of Learning Plan strives to provide access to a safe and nurturing learning opportunity and well-rounded inclusive curriculum that meets students' needs and establishes a bridge to learning as we adjust to a new instructional model during a period of extended school closure. Effective delivery of the Continuity of Learning Plan is underpinned through a robust professional learning plan for all HCPSS staff, ensuring access to technology for staff and students, and consistent and informative communication with families. HCPSS continues its commitment to equity, inclusion, and diversity in alignment with its Strategic Call to Action. As HCPSS has transitioned to a distance learning model, school system leaders are using data to assess effectiveness of the approach and to make any necessary adjustments to support teaching and learning.

Phased Approach

In order to build a comprehensive Continuity of Learning plan while simultaneously addressing training and technology needs, HCPSS designed a phased approach to distance learning.

Phase 1: March 13–29, 2020

The focus for students and families during Phase 1 was to:

- Remain healthy and adhere to the guidelines distributed by health professionals.
- Engage in the learning activities provided by the "Supporting Students at Home" guides.

Phase 2: March 30–April 17, 2020

Phase 2 of the Continuity of Learning plan had two main purposes:

- Engage staff in professional learning to successfully provide distance learning.
- Distribute devices to families in need.

Phase 3: Beginning April 14, 2020

During Phase 3, students began distance learning. The staggered approach aligned with necessary training for staff at each level and provides time to ensure staff and students have technological resources and training to implement this phase. High school students had virtual orientation meetings and began distance learning on April 14, 2020. Middle school students had a video orientation during the week of April 14, 2020 and began distance learning on April 20, 2020. Elementary school families had virtual orientation meetings and began using Dreambox and Lexia Core5 during the week of April 20, 2020 and transitioned

to full distance learning on April 27, 2020. The distance learning model consists of two main components: 1) weekly asynchronous learning tasks and 2) weekly virtual class check-ins via Google Meet.

Addressing Student Needs

The HCPSS Continuity of Learning plan carefully considered the access and learning needs of our various learners, including students in special education services, students with Section 504 plans, English learner students, students with academic needs, students engaged in gifted and talented programming, students experiencing homelessness, and students without access to devices and/or Internet.

Special Education

A generic countywide plan for special education services was not developed because each child's plan must be specific to the child's needs; therefore, every child must have their own individualized continuity of learning plan. The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) provided each local school system with guidance to address complex questions related to applying the guidance provided by the United States Department of Education (USDE). Parents are being offered several options to collaborate with staff on how best to support their child and will engage in virtual conferences and/or IEP team meetings as necessary. Frequent updates pertaining to requirements and procedures are provided to parent community group leaders on a regular basis.

Technology Needs



HCPSS' top priority is ensuring equitable access to devices for all 59,000 students. Initially, students/families were asked to evaluate their capability to access instructional materials online against a set of minimum criteria provided by the district. Then, the parents/guardians of all HCPSS students were asked to complete a technology needs survey to report whether they needed additional devices to meet the criteria.

The initial device rollout took place at high school buildings and focused on providing access to high school students. However those plans were modified to better enforce social distancing and safeguard the health of staff, students, and families. HCPSS developed a plan to pack and ship all technology devices through FedEx directly to the students who need to borrow them.

Additional information on technology deployment can be found online: <https://www.hcpss.org/coronavirus/devices/>

HCPSS COVID-19 Response

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Elementary school students participate in three different measurable types of Continuity of Learning activities every week: virtual check-ins, work in Dreambox, and work in Lexia Core5. Students also engage in activities posted in Canvas. Each of the following activities earns students a point (1 pt):

- Participates in virtual check-in with teacher through hcpss.me
- Engages in Dreambox
- Engages in Lexia Core5

ES Attendance

Every student who earns at least one point during the week (participates in one of the above three activities), is marked "Present" for the entire week. Any student who does not earn at least one point during the week (participates in none of the above activities), is marked "Absent" for the entire week.

Quarter 4 Grading and Reporting

During quarter 4, there are two potential grades – pass (P) or incomplete (I). If a student participates in 50% or more of the assignments in Dreambox and Lexia Core5, they receive a pass in mathematics and language arts. Other courses are graded by Canvas participation. If a student does not participate, they receive an incomplete. If the missing work is completed by September 15, 2020, it is converted to a pass. Otherwise it automatically will become a Non-Applicable (N/A).



MIDDLE SCHOOL

Middle school students participate in two different types of Continuity of Learning activities every week: virtual check-ins with teachers and completion of weekly assignments, due the Friday of each week. Middle school students have check-ins for 7 periods and are expected to complete 7 check-ins and 7 assignments each week.

Teachers mark students present in period attendance on the date the period is held when students report to the check-in through Canvas.

- Monday – Period 4(A/B)
- Tuesday – Period 1(A/B) and Period 5(A/B)
- Wednesday – Period 2(A/B) and Period 6(A/B)
- Thursday – Period 3(A/B) and Period 7(A/B)
- Friday – Assignment submitted in each class or, for students who receive extended time accommodation, a note sent by the student to their teacher(s) indicating that the work is "in progress."

On Friday, teachers enter period attendance if the assignment is submitted. Middle school teachers enter period attendance for check-ins each day in Synergy.

MS Attendance

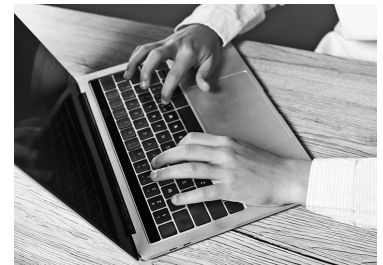
For attendance record keeping, a student earns 1 point for attendance at a check-in and 1 point for each assignment submitted. A student can earn up to 14 points per week (7 check-ins and 7 assignments).

At the end of each week, a secretary reviews attendance for students. Students are marked present in daily

attendance for the week if the student participated in 50% or more of virtual check-ins and/or submitted the current week's assignments in each class (earning 7 or more of the 14 points possible). If a student has participated in some check-ins and/or turned in some assignments, but earned "Present" in fewer than 50% of class periods and/or the assignments, they are not marked present for the whole week, but are marked present in Synergy for any days that they were present. Students who do not submit any assignments nor participate in any virtual check-ins are marked absent for the entire week, though attendance will not be used as an element of quarter 4 grades.

Quarter 4 Grading and Reporting

During quarter 4, there are two potential grades – pass (P) or incomplete (I). If a student participates in a class by completing 50% or more of the posted assignments, they receive a pass. Completion is defined as evidence of work on all components/sections of an assignment. A pass is calculated as an A for the quarter 4 grade. Otherwise, they receive an incomplete. If the missing work is completed by September 15, 2020, it will convert to a pass. Otherwise it automatically will become an N/A and not calculated into final grade. (These students will have the final grade calculated based on quarters 1–3.)



HCPSS COVID-19 Response

HIGH SCHOOL

High school students participate in two different types of Continuity of Learning activities every week: virtual check-ins with teachers and completion of weekly assignments, due the Friday of each week. High school students have check-ins for 7 periods and are expected to complete 7 check-ins and 7 assignments each week.



Teachers mark students present in period attendance on the date the period is held when students report to the check-in through Canvas.

- Monday – Period 4A
- Tuesday – Period 1 and Period 4B
- Wednesday – Period 2 and Period 5
- Thursday – Period 3 and Period 6
- Friday – Assignment submitted in all classes or, for students who receive extended time accommodation, a note sent by the student to their teacher(s) indicating that the work is “in progress.”

On Friday, teachers enter attendance if the assignment is submitted. Teachers in HS enter the attendance each day in Synergy.

HS Attendance

For attendance record keeping, a student earns 1 point for attendance at a check-in and 1 point for each assignment submitted. A student can earn up to 14 points per week (7 check-ins and 7 assignments).

At the end of each week, a secretary reviews attendance for students. Students are marked present in daily attendance for the week if the student participated in 50% or more of virtual check-ins and/or submitted the current week’s assignments in each class (earning 7 or more of the 14 points possible). If a student has participated in

some check-ins and/or turned in some assignments, but earned “Present” in fewer than 50% of class periods and/or the assignments, they are not marked present for the whole week, but are marked present in Synergy for any days that they were present. Students who do not submit any assignments nor participate in any virtual check-ins are marked absent for the entire week, though attendance will not be used as an element of quarter 4 grades.

Students who have work release or Dual Enrollment courses need to participate in 50% of class periods and assignments they are enrolled in at HCPSS to be marked “Present” for the week. There is no denial of credit during quarter 4.

Quarter 4 Grading and Reporting

During quarter 4, there are two potential grades – pass (P) or incomplete (I). If a student participates by completing 50% or more of the posted assignments, they receive a pass. Completion is defined as evidence of work on all components/sections of an assignment. A pass will be calculated as an A for the quarter 4 grade. Otherwise, they receive an incomplete. If the missing work is completed by September 15, 2020, it will convert to a pass. Otherwise it automatically will become an N/A and not be calculated into final grade and GPA. These students will have GPA and final grade calculated based on quarters 1–3 and mid-term. There will not be a final exam provided to students if students and staff do not return to the school buildings. The final grade calculation will be reconfigured and final course grades will be calculated without a final exam grade.

Seniors

Seniors will complete courses as of May 20, 2020. A pass is calculated as an A for the quarter 4 grade. Otherwise, they receive an incomplete. If the missing work is completed by September 15, 2020, it will convert to a pass. Otherwise it automatically will become an N/A and not be calculated into final grade and GPA. (These students will have GPA and final grade calculated based on quarters 1–3 and mid-term.) There will not be a final exam provided to students if we do not return to the school buildings. The final grade calculation will be reconfigured and final course grades will be calculated without a final exam grade.



HCPSS COVID-19 Response

Third Quarter Grading Information

For all students, HCPSS based 3rd quarter grades on work assigned on and prior to March 13, 2020, the last day schools were in session, because the majority of the quarter had already taken place when schools were closed. Teachers continued to grade work assigned prior to March 13 that had been received, and continued grading through April 24, allowing students to submit 3rd quarter work that was due by March 13 but had not yet been submitted to improve their grades, if desired.



Evaluation Plan for Continuity of Learning

As HCPSS has transitioned to a distance learning model, school system leaders are using data to assess effectiveness of the approach and to make any necessary adjustments to support teaching and learning. HCPSS has developed an evaluation plan for Continuity of Learning during this extended closure of school buildings, which considers pre-implementation, implementation, progress monitoring, and final evaluation.



Mental Health and Community Services

The HCPSS website contains information and links to access the many community services that are in place to assist during the Coronavirus epidemic as well as ways to access a variety of mental health supports. For more information and access to resources, visit: www.hcpss.org/coronavirus/#mental-health



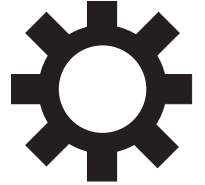
Redistricting

Our preparations for the 2020-21 redistricting continue to be on track. As soon as the Board's decision was announced on November 21, 2019, staff in all divisions moved quickly to assure a smooth transition to the adopted school boundaries for the next school year. Many students and families have already been welcomed by their new schools, and plans are in place to continue the orientation process. Adjustments to staffing allocations have been identified, and staff who will transfer to different schools have been oriented. Bus route revisions have been prepared, as have plans for accommodating regional programs, other special education services, and programming options such as JumpStart and JROTC. Families have been informed throughout the process, and all updated information is provided on the HCPSS website.



Bright Minds Foundation Access to Learning Fund

Bright Minds Foundation, the educational foundation of the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS), and HCPSS have launched an emergency Access to Learning Fund to raise money for critical education access supports for HCPSS students during the extended COVID-19 school closure. The supports have included hotspots for internet connectivity, assistive technology for special education students and school supplies for home use. More information can be found by visiting: <https://brightmindsfoundation.org/access-to-learning-fund/>.



Cleaning of Schools, Offices and Buses

All HCPSS schools and offices have been fully cleaned and disinfected and been inspected by both a Building Supervisor and Custodial Manager. Additionally, 98%, or 554 of our 563 buses have been cleaned and disinfected. Based on the Governor's stay-at-home orders in March, the remaining nine buses will be completed when the recovery phase is entered into and schools reopen.

Free Meal Service

HCPSS provides free Grab-N-Go meals to anyone age 18 and under and/or any HCPSS student, regardless of age, at 14 locations across the county throughout the state-mandated school closures. Participants are given a Grab-N-Go snack, lunch and dinner for that day, as well as a Grab-N-Go breakfast for the following day. Friday distributions at school-based locations include meals to sustain children through the weekend. Children do not need to be present; parents/guardian may pick up meals for their child(ren). There is no application, enrollment, or fees to participate in this program.



Donated Personal Protective Equipment

HCPSS donated 82,500 pairs of gloves and 5,650 masks to the Howard County Health Department to distribute to health providers across the county to support their efforts to keep our communities healthy. HCPSS continues to work with county and state agencies to support their messaging and efforts to eradicate COVID-19 from our communities.



The full Continuity of Learning plan and links to resources can be found online at: <https://www.hcpss.org/continuity-learning/>