



HCPSS Digital Education Center

The Howard County Public School System is planning for a full-time virtual option for students entering grades K–12 who wish to learn virtually for the 2021–2022 school year. Once finalized, the Digital Education Center (DEC) program will give students the opportunity to take classes and earn credits virtually, while receiving support services from both the DEC and their designated home school. DEC students will continue to be “enrolled” in their designated home school and will be able to participate in athletics and activities at that school.



The DEC is intended to function as an additional, separate K–12 center, which will continue to operate even after fully in-person learning resumes at all other HCPSS schools.

The DEC is currently in the planning and design phase. The final DEC scope and options are subject to funding, staffing and final Board of Education approval. DEC courses will meet the same standards as all HCPSS curricula. The primary difference between traditional, in-person courses and the DEC is the delivery of instruction, which will be through a virtual model. The DEC will be staffed by HCPSS administrators, teachers and support staff.

The DEC is scheduled to begin in the 2021–2022 school year.

- Any student entering grades K–12 during the 2021–2022 school year will have the opportunity to enroll in the DEC.
- Students must commit to the DEC for the **full school year** to participate.
- Students who want to return to in-person learning (if it is offered) at a HCPSS school location during the 2021–2022 school year should not sign up for the DEC.

Decisions on the 2021–2022 academic year—in terms of students returning in person, hybrid or virtually—have not yet been determined, and will be communicated as soon as possible.



Anticipated Timeline for DIGITAL EDUCATION CENTER

March 31	Virtual information sessions for all interested students and families
March 31–April 14	Parents/guardians complete an interest survey
April	Additional information sessions by level for interested students and families
April/May	Priority enrollment in DEC for for the 2021–2022 academic year
May 27	Board of Education scheduled to approve final budget, which includes funding for the DEC
August 30	First day of school for the 2021–2022 academic year

Requested budget, based on 1,250 Students*

Addition of 75.0 staff	\$4,067,650
Additional pension, Social Security, Medicare and Health benefits for positions	\$1,646,332
Wages, Contracted Services and Supplies	\$515,451
Total	\$6,229,433

**Actual budget may change based on reallocation of staffing and resources and actual enrollment*

See next page for comparison of Digital Education Center, hybrid and traditional school →

DIGITAL EDUCATION CENTER/HYBRID/TRADITIONAL SCHOOL COMPARISON CHART

	Proposed Digital Education Center (2021–2022)	Current Hybrid Model (2020–2021)	Traditional School Program
Grades	Kindergarten–12	Prekindergarten–12	Prekindergarten–12
Instructional Model	Virtual Synchronous virtual instruction and digital assignments either during or outside the school day No in-person learning	Hybrid In-person learning and synchronous virtual instruction during the school day	Face-to-face In-person instruction during the school day
Location	Virtual	Both virtual and HCPSS school buildings	HCPSS school buildings
Instructional Delivery	HCPSS teachers – virtual instruction	HCPSS teachers – concurrent instruction	HCPSS teachers – in-person instruction
Course Availability	Core Academic Level Courses Limited electives and related arts	Full HCPSS course catalog	Full HCPSS course catalog
Supplemental Programs	Access to all HCPSS supplemental programs (Beyond School Hours, Digital Education, Evening Program, Summer Program)		
Cost to Families	No cost		
Student Support Services	Provided virtually by the DEC and the student’s home school	Provided by the student’s home school	Provided by the student’s home school
Transportation	Not applicable	Yes	Yes
Meals	Available for purchase or free/reduced-price at the student’s home school	Available at no cost to families at any HCPSS school	Available for purchase or free/reduced-price at the student’s home school

HOWARD COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM

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