



Virtual Day Instruction Plan 2023-2024 School Year

Directions

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), building on the success of the opportunity provided in the 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 school years, will continue to provide local education agencies (LEAs) with the ability to repurpose certain days as virtual school days in the **2023-2024 school year**. To ensure meaningful and equitable virtual instruction during these days, pursuant to the Superintendent's authority under Education Article §2-303, the following process and attestations have been established to seek approval to repurpose certain days as virtual school days.

The days that may be considered for this opportunity include inclement weather days (i.e., snow days), staff professional learning days, high school graduation days to enable teachers to assist with or attend the graduation, or other similar circumstances described in this application.

School systems will have the opportunity to use a total of **eight days** as a virtual school day for the described purposes. The days may be synchronous or asynchronous, however, **no more than three of the eight days** may be used as an asynchronous day.

Please respond to each question within the box provided and review and check the box for each assurance. The completed application must be submitted to the State Superintendent for review and approval.



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Devices and Access to Wi-Fi

Describe the school system's plan to ensure that all students (especially students who are homeless, students with disabilities, and English learner students) and teachers have the necessary devices at home for virtual days and have access to Wi-Fi.

GCPS provides a 1:1 device ratio for students and staff to support student learning and instructional needs. All secondary students have a GCPS issued laptop that is taken home daily. GCPS also provides a device for all elementary students. These devices will be distributed for at-home virtual learning in advance of inclement weather and returned to the school building upon return to in-person instruction. Instructional staff are also provided a GCPS issued laptop to utilize at school and home to complete work related assignments.

All assignments will be posted in the Schoology platform for virtual learning days. In the event that a student does not have internet connectivity at home the student will be provided with hard copies of assignments in advance, when possible. Teachers will be expected to provide meaningful direct instruction to support students without internet connectivity and those who were absent upon return to school. See attendance procedures for further details.

Staff without internet connectivity will be expected to go to the nearest GCPS location or their school to access WiFi to deliver instruction and/or to complete the essential functions of their job. Should the staff member be unable to reach a location with the internet or their job site, the staff member will contact their direct supervisor to discuss alternatives for the day. The administrator will arrange appropriate synchronous instruction for the students involved.

Accommodations

Describe the plan to provide the student with a free appropriate public education and implement the learning continuity plan in the student's IEP



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(including specially designed instruction, related services, supplementary aides and services, and accommodations).

All special education services will continue to be provided as outlined on the student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP). All services will be provided synchronously, asynchronously, or through supplemental materials as outlined under the Emergency Conditions section of the student's IEP. Services may be provided in a whole group virtual setting, one-on-one through Google Meet, and/or through supplemental materials posted in Schoology. All services will be a priority, including secondary transition services. All general education teachers are informed of IEP, 504 student, and EL student plans through PowerSchool and IEP snapshots to ensure all services are provided.

Case managers will work closely with families to schedule and arrange special education services in accordance with a student's IEP. This communication will be ongoing and essential to providing services on a virtual learning day. In some unique situations where virtual services are not appropriate, special education/related services will be made up to the child upon returning to in-person instruction. Case managers and service providers will maintain a log of services provided during virtual instruction.

All supplementary aids/services will continue to be provided as outlined on the student's IEP. If appropriate, students will receive their supplementary aids/services virtually. In some situations, students may have learning tools sent home prior to the virtual learning day to have access to when they are at home learning.

General education teachers and special education teachers will work collaboratively to ensure that all students with disabilities receive the accommodations outlined in their IEP or Section 504 Plan. Accommodations will be provided through Schoology, Google Meets, or through supplemental materials sent home prior to the virtual learning day.

504 student accommodations will continue to be available to teachers in real-time through their PowerTeacher portal to monitor access and implementation. IEP student accommodations are provided to general education teachers through the IEP Snapshot. GCPS will continue to require the teacher's signature upon electronically viewing/hard copy receipt of the student's accommodations as well as when updates on those accommodations are made. Furthermore, to aid teachers in this process, GCPS developed the "Accommodations Guide for Distance Learning" for our students with special learning needs. This tool is meant to aid our faculty and staff in methods of helping to provide both our IEP and 504 students with the accommodations they have in a virtual classroom.

All IEP meetings will continue in a virtual format, through Google Meets, with parent permission. If parents would prefer to have their child's IEP meeting in-person, the IEP meeting will be rescheduled upon parent request. All IEP meetings scheduled on a virtual learning day will be moved to the afternoon to ensure all students have access to synchronous instruction in the morning.



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Opportunity for Engagement

The completed Department required Virtual Day Instruction Plan and Attestation Template must be publicly presented and discussed at a local school board meeting. An opportunity for parents to publicly comment or submit comments must be included as part of the school board meeting. The completed Virtual Day Instruction Plan and Attestation Template submitted by the LEA must have been voted on and approved by the local board. This is a required element of the application. There will be no Department review or consideration for approval until this step is completed.

Date of Local Board of Education Meeting(s):

September 12, 2023- First read and discussion of the *Virtual Day Instruction Plan*

September 12, 2023-October 10, 2023- Opportunity for parent feedback

October 10, 2023- Second read, discussion, and Board decision specific to the *Virtual Day Instruction Plan*



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Communication Process

Describe the communication process to students, teachers, parents/guardians, etc. that the day will be virtual (synchronous or asynchronous) and the plan for instruction.

Upon approval by the MSDE, the Virtual Day Instruction Plan will be posted on the main page of the GCPS website. At that time, the approved plan will also be highlighted in a press release that will be distributed to all current media outlets. Schools will also communicate school specific details with their staff, students, and parents using a variety of strategies to ensure that each stakeholder group is prepared to implement virtual learning based on the approved plan.

GCPS will use all current media outlets to inform schools and the community with as much notice as possible before a virtual learning day is to be implemented due to inclement weather. Families and staff who have signed up for SchoolMessenger will also receive notice through this forum similar to any other school related message. The announcement will indicate that GCPS will be moving to a **Virtual Learning Day.**

Anyone experiencing technical difficulties on a virtual learning day may call the IT Helpdesk at 1-888-285-7254 or email helpdesk@garrettcountyschools.org for assistance between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.

It is important to note that implementing a virtual learning day due to inclement weather will be another tool in the toolbox for GCPS. This option will be used on a case by case basis particularly when there is confidence in the forecast that provides advance notice of significant storms. GCPS will continue to utilize 2 hour delays, 3 hour delays, 3 hour early dismissals, and traditional snow days when weather conditions warrant the use of these options.

Upon approval, the asynchronous virtual day that is pre-planned on the 91st day will be communicated to staff and the community using all standard media outlets. Schools will follow up with school specific details afterwards.



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Attendance Procedures for Asynchronous Days

Describe the specific procedures on how attendance will be taken on asynchronous days.

At this time, GCPS plans on implementing one asynchronous virtual learning day based on this plan. For this day, students with internet access will be marked present if they submit their assignments through Schoology at any time during the 91st day. If submission occurs after 3:00 p.m. then the student's attendance **will** need to be updated from absent to present the following day. The teacher will need to notify the person in charge of maintaining the daily attendance in their building to ensure the student's attendance is updated accordingly.

For students without the internet, if the student returns the paper assignments completed on the next scheduled school day, the student's attendance **will** need to be changed from absent to present in this situation. The teacher will need to notify the person in charge of maintaining the daily attendance in their building to ensure the student's attendance is updated accordingly.



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Additional Circumstances anticipated for the use of a Virtual Day

Describe any other days that are anticipated for the use of a virtual day in your LEA.

At this time, GCPS is planning to:

- Use synchronous virtual learning on inclement weather days not to exceed the 8 virtual learning days permitted by MSDE.
- Use asynchronous virtual instruction on the 91st day of school, which is currently scheduled as a half day for students.

Synchronous Virtual Learning Days (Additional Information):

- Virtual learning days due to inclement weather will be announced in advance at the discretion of the Superintendent.
- Make-up days specified on the school calendar may still be utilized as needed. GCPS will follow standard processes specific to using pre-identified make-up days, including appropriate communication in advance to the community.

Asynchronous Virtual Learning Plan for the 91st Day (Additional Information):

- The 91st day is designated as a professional half-day at the end of the first semester of school for teachers to finalize grades, plan, and complete other necessary tasks.
- Staff will report on-site on the 91st day. Staff will use standard operating procedure for attendance.
- Students will participate in asynchronous virtual learning on the 91st day.
- This will allow greater time for teacher planning, school improvement work, or professional development while leveraging virtual instruction to support student learning.

In the event that GCPS does not have many virtual inclement weather days, GCPS would like to have the option of implementing virtual learning on professional development half-days that are currently scheduled on the 2023-2024 school calendar. If this option would be utilized, advanced notice would be given to all stakeholders. GCPS would not exceed the 8 total days of virtual learning allowed by the MSDE.

Additional Factors

Describe any other factors particular to the plan for virtual days in your LEA.



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Instructional Schedules

Elementary Sample Schedule

Synchronous learning for all students will be held from 8:15-12:30 with age appropriate breaks, followed by asynchronous work in the afternoon.

Morning Meeting/SEL/Health	8:15-8:30
English Language Arts	8:30-9:30
Resource	9:30-10:00
ELA Tiered Instruction	10:00-10:30
Science/Social Studies/Health	10:30-11:00
Social Emotional Learning	11:00-11:30
Math (Tiered instruction from 12:00-12:30)	11:30-12:30
Lunch	12:30-1:00
Asynchronous Work	1:00-3:00

*Administrators and teachers will share specific student/class schedules with families.

Middle School Sample Schedule

Synchronous learning for all students will be from 8:15-12:30 with age appropriate breaks, followed by asynchronous work in the afternoon.

Period 1	8:15-9:05
Period 2	9:05-9:55
Period 3	9:55-10:45
Period 4	10:45-11:35
Period 5	11:35-12:25
Lunch	12:30-1:00
Asynchronous Work	1:00-3:00



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*Administrators and teachers will share specific student/class schedules with families.

Secondary Sample Schedule

Synchronous learning for all students will be from 8:15-12:30, followed by asynchronous work in the afternoon.

Period 1	8:15-9:15
Period 2	9:20-10:20
Period 3	10:25-11:25
Period 4	11:30-12:30
Lunch	12:30-1:00
Asynchronous Work	1:00-3:00

*Administrators and teachers will share specific student/class schedules with families.

Teacher Sample Schedule

Planning/Prep	8:00-8:15
Period 1- US History	8:15-9:15
Period 2- Planning	9:20-10:20
Period 3- US History	10:25-11:25
Period 4- World History	11:30-12:30
Lunch	12:30-1:00
1:00-3:36	Planning, IEP meetings, etc. (based on needs of students/teacher)

Attendance Protocols for Synchronous Virtual Days:

Students with internet access will be expected to join live synchronous instruction through Google Meets to be counted present during each virtual learning day due to inclement weather. There will be a minimum of **four** hours of synchronous instruction and attendance will be documented in PowerSchool for all students.



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For students without internet access at home, paper assignments will be provided prior to the virtual learning day. Students will be marked present if they submit their work upon returning to in-person instruction.

In the event alternate work cannot be provided prior to the virtual learning day, the student will be granted an additional day to complete the work to be counted present for the virtual day. If the work is not submitted within this time frame the student will be counted absent and the makeup policy for work should be followed. If the student returns the work completed on the next scheduled school day as required, the student's attendance for the virtual learning day **will** need to be changed from absent to present.

If a student is absent on a virtual learning day work is to be turned in based on the GCPS make-up work policy found in the Student's Rights and Responsibilities Handbook.

DEFINITIONS

Present ~ a student will be marked as present when there is evidence of the following:

- Attending classes via Google Meet during the scheduled time
- Cameras turned on during the Google Meet

SECONDARY SCHOOLS- students must attend at least half of the class period to be considered present (ex: 60 minute class, student attends a minimum of 30 minutes). Attendance is taken each period just like a normal school day.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS- students must attend at least three hours of synchronous instruction to be in attendance the full day. Students attending between one and three hours will be marked present for half a day. Any student attending less than one hour will be marked absent for the entire day.

Absent ~ a student will be marked as absent when there is NOT evidence of the following:

- Attending classes via Google Meet during the schedule time
- Not turning on their camera during the Google Meet

VIRTUAL INCLEMENT WEATHER DAY RELATED ABSENCE CODE AND DEFINITIONS

CODE 07 (Hazardous Weather) - Assigned for any student that DOES NOT attend their virtual synchronous classes. This is an excused absence and missed work can be made up based on the GCPS Student Handbook.



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Attestations (Please check each box)

- ☒ There will be a minimum of four hours of synchronous instruction for all students on each synchronous virtual day.
- ☒ There will be no more than a total of eight virtual days.
- ☒ There will be no more than three asynchronous virtual days out of the total of eight possible virtual days.
- ☒ Attendance will be taken for all students and teachers during the virtual day.
- ☒ For asynchronous days, a transparent process will be used to take attendance.
- ☒ Virtual days will not negatively impact a student's grade. There will be meaningful opportunities for students to make up work outside of virtual learning.
- ☒ The Virtual Day Instruction Plan was presented at a publicly accessible local board of education meeting. Parents were provided an opportunity to provide comment on the plan and the local board of education voted in favor of the plan presented in this application.
- ☒ The Virtual Day Instruction Plan will be posted on the LEA website. The link will be provided to MSDE upon approval of the Virtual Day Instruction Plan by MSDE.
- ☒ No employee's pay will be negatively impacted by the decision to have a virtual day. This includes custodians, cafeteria workers, etc.
- ☒ Use of a virtual day for any grade or grade band counts as one of the school system's virtual days.



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Signature indicates agreement with the process and attestations for virtual days to be implemented as indicated in the 2023-2024 school year. Please submit the completed plan to State Superintendent Mohammed Choudhury by email at mohammed.choudhury@maryland.gov. The plan will be reviewed and response will be provided in a timely manner.

Local Education Agency: Garrett County Public Schools

Superintendent: Dr. Brenda McCartney

Superintendent Signature _____

Date _____

Board President: Mr. Tom Woods

Board President Signature _____

Date _____