



Garrett County Public Schools REOPENING AND RECOVERY PLAN

Planning for a safe return to in-person
instruction for GCPS students and staff

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A special note to all stakeholders:



The GCPS Reopening & Recovery Plan is a working document that will grow and evolve over time as we work through the process of recovery.

Additionally, it is very important to recognize that this plan may need to be adjusted based on our local COVID 19 metrics and the most current guidance from the Center for Disease Control (CDC), the Maryland State Governor, Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), Maryland Department of Health (MDH), and Garrett County Health Department (GCHD).

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GCPS is dedicated to providing the public with a reopening plan in regards to the following categories below.

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ACCESS AND EQUITY

GCPS is dedicated to providing equitable services to all students, regardless of their disability, in compliance with IDEA, Section 504, and Title II.

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COMMUNICATION

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GCPS is dedicated to answering public questions in regards to the Reopening and Recovery Plan.

INTRODUCTION

Garrett County Public Schools (GCPS) recognizes that these past three school years have been challenging for our students, staff, and community due to the COVID 19 pandemic. Therefore, GCPS has created a Reopening and Recovery Plan, which focuses on planning for a safe return to in-person instruction with an established continuity of learning plan.

The GCPS Reopening and Recovery Plan emphasizes how the school system will ensure continuity of services, including but not limited to services to address students' academic needs and students' and staff's social, emotional, mental health, and other needs. The plan also incorporates how the school system will maintain the health and safety of students, educators, and school system staff.

GCPS values the input of students, staff, administrators, and community members in the development of the Reopening and Recovery Plan. GCPS will continue to receive stakeholder feedback throughout the duration of the plan and update any areas as needed.



In order to meet the unique needs of all stakeholders, GCPS will adopt the Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child (WSCC) model to ensure a comprehensive approach that meets the needs of students. The 10 components are:

- Physical education and physical activity
- Nutrition environment and services
- Health education
- Social and emotional climate
- Physical environment
- Health services
- Counseling, psychological and social services
- Employee wellness
- Community involvement
- Family engagement

These components are embedded throughout the Reopening and Recovery Plan and will remain a priority for moving GCPS forward. More information on how GCPS will integrate the WSCC model along with the associated Emergency Operation Protocols can be found by "[CLICKING HERE](#)".

ACCESS AND EQUITY

Garrett County Public Schools (GCPS) is committed to safely returning all students back to in-person learning.

GCPS will provide full in-person instruction five days a week.

GCPS will provide full access to campuses and facilities.



Based on data, GCPS does not intend to provide a virtual- only option.

GCPS will implement normal school operating hours and schedules.

Educational Equity

Ensuring educational equity remains a central focus for Garrett County Public Schools as we welcome all students back to full in-person learning. As such GCPS will:

- Ensure a welcoming and inclusive environment focused on engaging relationships for all students
- Recognize the diverse experiences students have had throughout the pandemic
- Identify and respond to specific student needs by ensuring appropriate classroom support, intervention, and recovery programs for all students
- Recognize the social-emotional needs of students and provide appropriate support to all students as an essential component of learning
- Embrace differences amongst students and our community as assets that strengthen learning experiences
- Welcome and engage families as essential partners in their child's learning
- Provide all students with access to the resources they need to reach high levels of learning
- Utilize evidence-based interventions and resources to deliver high-quality instruction to all students while providing differentiated learning opportunities specific to identified student needs
- Focus on moving students forward with grade-level instruction while quickly identifying and addressing learning gaps with appropriate support
- Ensure that extended learning opportunities such as tutoring, after school programs, and summer programs meet the needs of the whole child

Access to Educational Rigor and Resources

Garrett County Public Schools will ensure that all students have access to all digital and traditional curriculum resources available for each grade level or course to ensure appropriately rigorous instruction throughout the 2023-2024 school year. All students will have access to the systems Learning Management System (Schoology), online resources, textbooks, recovery opportunities, etc. GCPS will provide a device for every student. Each school will provide appropriate support for students who are absent to ensure continuity of services.



ACCESS AND EQUITY (cont.)

GCPS is committed to the delivery of effective special education programs and services provided to students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment.



Special Education

All students must have available to them a free, appropriate public education (FAPE) designed to meet their unique needs and prepare them for employment, post-secondary education, and independent living.

GCPS will ensure the following:

- Children who need special education and related services are identified, located, and evaluated in compliance with the Child Find Process.
- Students qualifying for the Infants and Toddlers (I&T) program will continue to receive services in the natural environment.
- All students eligible for services will have an appropriately developed IFSP/IEP, including planning for emergency conditions.
- The determination for recovery/compensatory services has been made for every student who has/had an IEP or IFSP as of December 1, 2021.
- Secondary Transition remains a priority to focus on seamlessly transitioning students into a life of economic independence and meaningful participation in the community.
- Families are provided with the option to attend IFSP and IEP meetings in person, virtually, and by phone.

For additional information about Special Education services, please visit

<https://www.gcps.net/special-education>.



ACCESS AND EQUITY (cont.)

GCPS will continue to comply with the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA), Section 504, and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Special Education:

General Provisions under a Free and Appropriate Education (FAPE)

Within the district-wide continuity of learning plan, GCPS will continue to ensure that a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) is provided to all students with disabilities. Case managers will continue to monitor student progress, communicate with families, and document service delivery. Through ongoing progress monitoring, members of the IEP teams will determine if the IEP can be implemented as is or if there are new or different student needs upon the return. If there are new or different student needs, the IEP will either be amended or revised to reflect these needs. Progress monitoring will be ongoing throughout the school year to continuously evaluate student needs. In addition, IEP teams will continue to plan how the IFSP/IEP can be implemented under Emergency Conditions at annual review meetings. Additionally, all 504 accommodations will be implemented as they are written within the 504 plan to ensure equal access to instruction.

Child Find

Child Find is an effort coordinated by Garrett County Public Schools and the Maryland State Department of Education to:

- Locate and identify children and youth ages birth through 21 with disabilities who are in need of special education and related services.
- Inform parents and/or guardians of services available from their local school systems and other state and community agencies free of charge

During the reopening time, GCPS will continue to provide Child Find information to our families and community through brochures, newsletters, publications, social media, and on the school website.



Evaluations

GCPS will continue with all formal assessments for students to determine initial eligibility and continued eligibility for students. Assessments will be scheduled following standard operating procedures. Increased mitigation strategies may be implemented as necessary.

ACCESS AND EQUITY (cont.)

Service Provision

All special education services and 504 accommodations will continue to be implemented as they are written on the IFSP/IEP or 504 plan. If there are new or different needs, the IEP/504 Coordinator will schedule an IFSP/IEP or 504 meeting to make changes as appropriate. All general education teachers will be informed of IEP and 504 student plans through PowerSchool and IEP Snapshots.



Access to Accommodations



504 student accommodations will continue to be available to teachers in real time through their PowerTeacher portal to monitor their access/implementation. GCPS will continue to require the teacher's signature upon electronically viewing/hard copy receipt of the student's accommodations and 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 the virtual classroom.

Progress Monitoring

Progress monitoring for students on an IFSP/IEP will be continuous throughout the school year. Case managers will track quarterly progress of IEP goals and progress reports will be sent home to parents/guardians. In addition, case managers will notify the IEP/504 Coordinator if new or different needs arise throughout the school year that may require a change in the IFSP/IEP or 504 plan.



Annual Team Meetings

All annual team meetings will continue to take place throughout this school year. GCPS will continue to provide families with the option to attend meetings in-person, virtually, and by phone. In addition, GCPS will be offering hybrid meetings in which some participants are in person and some participants join virtually. The determination for how the meeting will take place will always be in collaboration with our families. This applies to IFSP, IEP, and 504 plan meetings.



ACCESS AND EQUITY (cont.)

Special Education:

IEP Services Under Emergency Conditions

In accordance with House Bill 714, GCPS will determine how IEP services will be implemented under Emergency Conditions. Emergency Conditions are defined as 10 or more consecutive days in which a student with a disability is unable to receive services, while other students are continuing to receive instruction. IEP teams will be reviewing each section of the IEP and determining if adjustments need to be made to a student's IEP during Emergency Conditions. This review and determination will continue to take place at annual review meetings.

Special Education:

IEP Services During Quarantine or Isolation

Quarantine is no longer recommended for schools and Early Childhood Centers per the CDC.

If a student with a disability is in isolation, GCPS will ensure a continuum of service delivery. Special education services during isolation may include synchronous and asynchronous service delivery models. In addition, service delivery may take place via telephone or through individualized learning packets. The decision on how services will be delivered will be made on an individual basis in collaboration with the parents and case manager. All service providers will log IEP services for students during isolation and continue to monitor progress.



Special Education: Compensatory/Recovery Services

In a small number of situations, due to the student's needs, GCPS may be unable to provide FAPE in a virtual model. In these extreme situations, GCPS will follow the System Plan for Compensatory/Recovery Services, to ensure that these services are provided to the student. In most situations, the case manager or service provider will submit a referral to the IEP Coordinator indicating that there was an inability to provide FAPE. The IEP Coordinator will then schedule an IEP meeting to discuss how these services will be made up to the student and if there are additional needs. IEP Coordinators continue to discuss the implications of any future statewide school closure on students during all annual IEP meetings. The determination for compensatory services will continue on an individual basis.

ACCESS AND EQUITY (cont.)

State Guidance

The Maryland State Department of Education, Division of Early Intervention and Special Education Services, has released numerous guidance documents that have been used in the county-based decision-making process. These documents can be referenced using the links below.

- [Technical Assistance Bulletin: Recovery Efforts](#)
- [TIPs for Teaching and Learning in the Least Restrictive Environment \(LRE\) in varied Service Delivery Models](#)
- [TIPs for Supporting Mask Wearing for Students with Disabilities](#)

ACCESS AND EQUITY (cont.)

Section 504

Garrett County Public Schools will continue to provide accommodations to students who receive services under Section 504. Garrett County Public Schools will provide a free, appropriate, public education (FAPE) to all students as we return to the traditional classroom learning environment. The following information has been shared with GCPS Administration and 504 Case Managers:

- Students will continue to receive services as outlined in their Section 504 Plans.
- Section 504 meetings are ongoing and every effort will be made to return to in-person meetings. Depending on the space available for meetings, accommodations may be made to allow some members of the team to attend virtually.
- Service providers will be permitted full access to campuses and facilities in order to meet student needs.
- Regular monitoring, reporting, etc. according to federal/state/local guidelines will resume accordingly.

English Language Learners (EL)

GCPS offers an EL program for students in grades kindergarten through grade 12. Students are identified as EL based on a home language survey and an English proficiency screening assessment. The goal of these services is to promote successful English language acquisition through concurrent language and content learning. The sections below offer a summary of the current approach to EL services employed by GCPS.

- EL instructors will continue to provide services to their assigned students on their caseload according to the student's English Learning Plan (ELP).
- The learning activities will continue to be designed to both challenge and support the EL student's individual needs.
- The EL instructors will collaborate with their student's content teachers to assist in modifying lessons/projects/activities/materials as needed.
- The EL instructors will also aid in monitoring their student's progress and evaluation as he/she advances through the curriculum.
- The annual assessment, the WIDA: ACCESS for English Learners will be completed in winter/early spring during the open test window according to the state testing calendar. All students receiving EL services are expected to participate.
- Contact with families will continue to be ongoing as needed and communication will be in the family's native language.

English Language (EL) Services During Quarantine or Isolation

Quarantine is no longer recommended for schools and Early Childhood Centers per the CDC.

If a student identified as an English Language Learner (EL) is in isolation, GCPS will ensure a continuum of service delivery. English Language services during isolation may include synchronous and asynchronous service delivery models. In addition, service delivery may take place via telephone, Google Meets, or through individualized learning packets modified according to the student's English Learning Plan. The decision on how services will be delivered will be made on an individual basis in collaboration with the parents, his/her teachers, and the EL teacher.

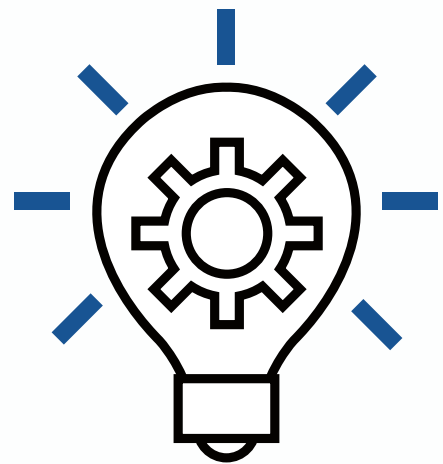
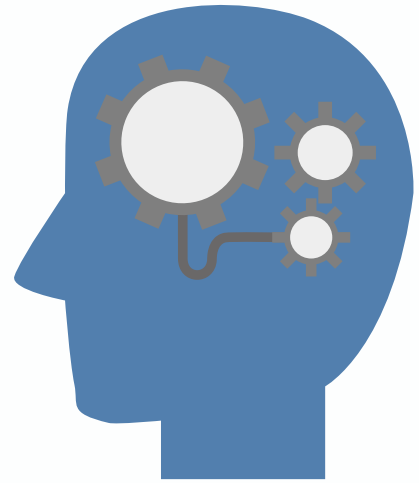
ACCESS AND EQUITY (cont.)



Gifted and Talented (GT)

GCPS offers a GT program for students in grades 3 through grade 12. Students are identified as GT by meeting a set of criteria including scores from the Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT), Reading Lexile Level, Math Quantile Score, and scores from both the MCAP English Language Arts and Mathematics State Assessments. The goal of the GT program is to help the identified student grow socially, emotionally, and academically while cultivating his/her fullest potential while constructing his/her own knowledge and becoming a successful lifelong learner. In the 2023-24 school year, GCPS will have two dedicated GT teachers who will work in coordination with other staff to support program needs. All schools and identified staff will:

- provide services to GT students according to the student's identified strengths and/or talents.
- monitor their student's progress as he/she advances through the curriculum.
- support the continuation of the differentiated instruction within the instructional bands in all secondary schools to maximize student potential (i.e., Merit-middle/high, Honors-middle/high, AP-high).
- conduct extension activities and enrichment programming in grades 3 - 5 as well as a focus on the William & Mary Literature Units to support ELA instruction in those grades.
- provide instruction of the Pre K-2 Primary Talent Development Modules in collaboration with the classroom teacher weekly.



STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK & COMMUNICATION

GCPS is committed to communicating and engaging with stakeholders throughout this process. Subsequently, GCPS will:

Google Form Survey Data

Collect and analyze data from stakeholders specific to the reopening of school in the fall of 2021 and the use of the American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ARP ESSER) funding.

Stakeholder data may be reviewed by "[CLICKING HERE](#)".

Draft Reopening and Recovery Plan

Post a draft Reopening and Recovery Plan on the GCPS website by July 30, 2021. Draft mid-year revisions will be posted by Jan. 28, 2022. Additional revisions will be posted by March 11, 2022. Another set of mid-year revisions will be posted by Aug. 15, 2022 due to updated federal, state, and local guidance. The final revised plan will be posted August 1, 2023.

Public Input

Seek public input on the Draft Reopening and Recovery Plan along with any revisions taking such input into account.

Ongoing Accessibility

Ensure the Reopening and Recovery Plan is accessible to all stakeholders.

Stakeholder Meetings

GCPS will periodically review and update the Reopening and Recovery Plan not less than every six months through September 30, 2024 using various stakeholder groups including but not limited to the:

- Title I/Elementary Parent Liaison Group
- Garrett County Educators Association (GCEA)
- Special Education Citizens Advisory Committee (SECAC)
- Superintendent's Cabinet
- LEAD Instructional Team
- Administration and Supervision Team
- Garrett County Health Department
- Garrett County Student Council

During the months of April 2023 through July 2023, GCPS gathered input from the stakeholder groups above to update the Reopening and Recovery Plan.

Information specific to stakeholder feedback can be found by "[CLICKING HERE](#)".

Communication

All communication regarding Garrett County Public Schools flows directly through the office of the Superintendent and the Manager of Communications Office. Formal press releases specific to the GCPS Reopening and Recovery Plan will be made accessible on the GCPS website and social media venues. Press releases will also be sent to the local papers and radio stations. GCPS will also use School Messenger as an additional measure to communicate directly with parents. Individual schools will communicate with parents as appropriate throughout the reopening and recovery period.

**Your
input is
valuable
in
moving
GCPS
forward.**



RECOVERY

Identifying Instructional Needs & Monitoring Student Progress

At the beginning of the 2023-2024 school year, GCPS will administer the following assessments to identify student learning gaps and monitor progress throughout the school year based on a student's grade level.



Assessment	Grade Level
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• i-Ready ELA and Math Universal Screener• i-Ready EOY grade 8 Math diagnostic results and Savvas enVision AGA Benchmarks• IMSE Orton Gillingham Baseline Assessment• Grade Level ELA assessments in grades 9-10• Independent Reading Level Assessment (IRLA)• Kindergarten Readiness Assessment• Spring 2023 Administration Preliminary Data of the Algebra 1 and ELA 10 Maryland Comprehensive Assessment Program (MCAP)• Spring 2023 Administration Preliminary Data of Maryland Comprehensive Assessment Program (MCAP)• Grade level formative assessments	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Grades K-8• Grade 9• Grades K-2• Grades 9-10• Grades K-5• Kindergarten• Students in Alg. 1 and English 10• 3-8 and specific high school courses• All grades/subjects at teacher discretion

GCPS has created a document with specific details related to assessment, identifying learning gaps, and progress monitoring as well as possible interventions. For additional information please refer to the County-Wide Assessment 2023-2024 document found by "[CLICKING HERE](#)."

Results from the assessments above will provide teachers with critical information to guide grade-level instruction while quickly identifying and addressing learning gaps with appropriate instructional support. Additionally, these assessment results will allow schools to identify students with the greatest amount of learning loss as well as those most impacted by the COVID 19 pandemic. This information along with other supporting data such as the level of engagement last school year, attendance, and course grades will be used to identify and prioritize supports to students such as tutoring, after-school programming, summer opportunities, and in-school intervention.

GCPS performance data and projected student outcomes that are disaggregated by race, service group, and gender can be found by "[CLICKING HERE](#)"

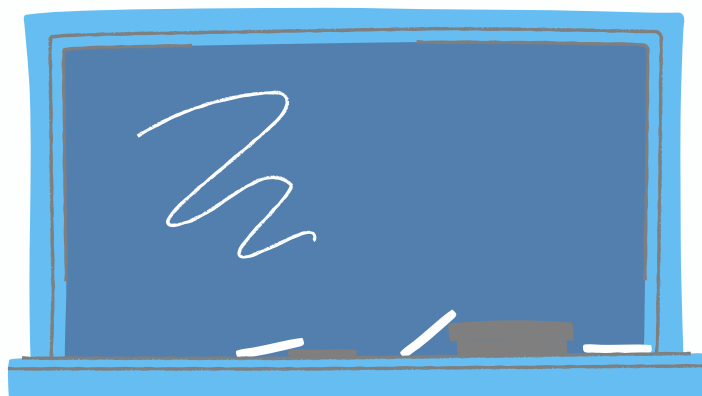
RECOVERY (cont.)

Intervention and Recovery Strategies

GCPS will implement a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) to provide instruction that meets each student's individual needs. This process begins with students receiving core grade-level instruction within the classroom. Teachers will utilize evidenced-based curriculum resources and strategies focused on grade-level instruction while appropriately differentiating instruction to ensure accessibility for all students. Using formative assessments and county direction specific to priority standards, teachers will be able to weave in any missed content standards or pre-requisite material necessary to access grade-level material for all students. Students who require additional instructional support to close learning gaps will receive supplemental interventions in small groups or individually based on their individual needs. All students in grades K-8 will receive access to their personal math pathway in i-Ready as a recovery initiative to enhance grade level instruction and address gaps in learning. Elementary schools will have two intervention/enrichment periods built into the regular schedule to provide necessary support while middle and high school will have one intervention/enrichment period.



GCPS, in collaboration with Garrett County Community Action, was also awarded a competitive grant through the Maryland State Department of Education to expand our Judy Centers. This opportunity will allow for increased instructional and parent family engagement support within our Judy Center service areas for students ages 0-5 as we work towards all students being ready for kindergarten.



RECOVERY (cont.)

Intervention and Recovery Strategies

GCPS will utilize evidenced-based intervention programs or instructional strategies including but not limited to:

- iReady Math Suite
- iReady ELA Suite
- Haggerty Phonological Awareness Curriculum
- IMSE Orton Gillingham
- IMSE Phonological Awareness
- ARC Intervention Tool Kits
- Evidenced-based curriculum resources
- What Works Clearinghouse Instructional Strategies



Utilizing the MTSS process, identified students will be provided with the appropriate interventions during the regular school day. Other extended learning opportunities for students may include but are not limited to:

- Small-Group Tutoring
- After-School Programs (i.e. math academy, evening high school)
- Summer Programming



Teachers and administrators will work to identify and prioritize students in need of additional resources through the Professional Learning Community (PLC) process. Teams will meet regularly to analyze student data, identify students who need intervention based on essential skills, set goals, and monitor progress. Documentation will be kept through PLC minutes as well as in the PowerSchool Response to Intervention database.

RECOVERY (cont.)

Curriculum Development

GCPS will follow our most up-to-date curriculum frameworks aligned to the Maryland College and Career Readiness standards during the 2023-2024 school year. Students will have access to high quality instruction delivered by GCPS certified teachers as well as access to all digital and traditional curriculum resources available for each grade level or course to maximize academic success. Furthermore, as evidenced by the MSDE approved Perkins V plan submitted on April 28, 2022 and revised on June 7, 2022, GCPS career and technical education (CTE) pathways are aligned to the MSDE frameworks and meet the state standards. Instruction in CTE will be resuming in-person under normal operating procedures following COVID 19 safety protocols identified by the system during the 2023-24 school year. All CTE courses will align with the MSDE frameworks and state standards. Additionally, career coaches have been employed by GCPS to career development opportunities for students in middle and high schools during the 2023-2024 school year.

GCPS will be entering our third year of the i-Ready Math suite which includes a diagnostic assessment, instructional tools, and an evidence-based intervention program that identifies potential gaps, monitors individual progress, and provides teachers with the math intervention tools beyond our core curriculum for grades K-8. i-Ready data has informed intervention, contributed to monitoring the progress of school improvement goals and led to instructional changes for individual students. i-Ready math suite has played a major role in building a data driven decision making culture within our district when strategically planning math instruction. Classroom teachers, intervention teachers, tutors, and administrators will continue to have access to the i-Ready data that has informed our recovery efforts as we exit the pandemic. We have also upgraded our core curriculum to the most recent versions of the enVision series from Savvas.

GCPS teachers contributed to the creation of a new elementary science scope and sequence which was implemented in the 2021-2022 school year. We were very focused on returning to hands-on activities, lab experiences and performance based tasks. Our return to these types of science activities were delayed by safety protocols as we returned to in person instruction. However, our teachers implemented the new scope and sequence and GCPS will again focus on returning to those hands-on activities and “doing science” during the 2023-2024 school year. Teachers and students have adapted to virtual labs and other adapted opportunities to supplement instruction during the pandemic. However, we strongly believe there are no replacements for the engagement and experiential learning that comes when students are actively engaged in science labs and investigations.

RECOVERY (cont.)

Curriculum Development (cont.)

During the 2023-2024 school year, GCPS will be in the second year of implementing the K-5 2020, 6-8 2021 and Algebra 1 AGA 2018 versions of the Savvas enVision math curriculum. These are all considerable upgrades from the 2016 K-8 series and the 2014 Algebra 1 materials which we were previously using in our schools during the pandemic. The newer versions of the enVision series is highly rated by Ed Reports and enables our teachers to stay in a familiar platform while enjoying the benefits of access to improved curriculum materials. GCPS will again monitor the pacing and progress of our teachers working through the newer versions of our math curriculum. During the summer of 2023, GCPS math teachers met for curriculum development updates as well as to develop the math comprehensive plan. We also had an opportunity to review all instructional data collected from i-Ready and the MCAP preliminary reports. GCPS will provide updated guidance regarding priority standards for several grade levels, adjustments to our scope and sequence and lesson data that should help teachers plan and prepare for the upcoming school year. Teachers will be meeting in county wide grade level teams this fall for professional development and curriculum sessions in the area of mathematics. A substantial amount of math data will be shared with principals, teacher leaders and classroom teachers in order to target specific goals in the upcoming School Improvement Plans.

GCPS will be implementing the i-Ready ELA suite of instructional tools as an evidenced-based intervention program that identifies potential gaps, monitors individual progress, and provides teachers with ELA intervention tools beyond our core curriculum for grades K-8. i-Ready data will inform intervention and a personalized individual ELA instructional pathway for each student in grades 6-8. Classroom teachers, intervention teachers, tutors, and administrators will have access to the i-Ready data and will monitor progress during the year. Grade level screening assessments and benchmarks will be implemented in the high school ELA courses. Updated resources for the foundational programs in the elementary program have been purchased and the scope and sequence has been updated to align to a broader scope with a structured literacy approach to instruction. Literacy coaches will be assisting in data analysis, followed by instruction design and delivery to increase fidelity of evidence based practices in all grades. Lead Teachers will be creating shell courses to support the implementation of evidence based practices based on the Science of Reading.

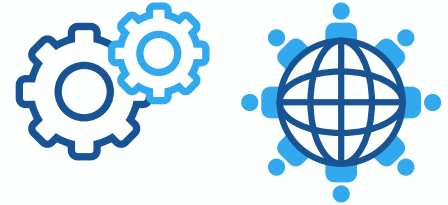
GCPS is in the process of writing and implementing the new social studies framework for grades K-5, which will focus on learning how to read and write like a historian, focus on developing background knowledge and embedding content vocabulary. Social Studies teacher leaders will be refining shell courses to guide the pacing, establish norms of instruction, and provide tips to embed the document based question process into instruction. GCPS adopted a new elementary social studies curriculum and will be supporting implementation in the coming year with a focus on discipline literacy.

RECOVERY (cont.)

Professional Development

GCPS is committed to supporting teachers with high-quality professional development opportunities to support instruction and recovery strategies. The following professional development opportunities are on the horizon:

- Coaching professional development facilitated by Insight
- Professional Learning Community professional development facilitated by Insight
- ELA and Math Comprehensive Plan Development
- Haggerty phonological awareness training
- Early Childhood LETRS training aligned to the Science of Reading for all Pre-K and Judy Center Teachers
- Kindergarten to 3rd-grade LETRS training aligned to the Science of Reading for all K-3 teachers teaching general education, special education, and intervention
- Mental Health, Behavior, Trauma professional development
- Training on new social studies framework for 6th and 7th grade for world history
- Vertical alignment work for US History grades 4, 5, 8, and high school as well as world history for 6th, 7th grade, and high school
- Writing professional development including DBQs and disciplinary literacy
- Health professional development
- Number Sense Routine training for PreK-5
- Maryland Council for the Teachers of Mathematics (MCTM) Elementary Summer Academy 2023 - Grades K-5
- County-Wide grade level math professional development and curriculum development
- Professional Development specific to working with students with autism
- Implementation of teacher leaders in the area of mathematics, ELA, Social Studies, and Special Education at all grade levels to support curriculum development
- Utilize instructional coaches, teacher leaders, and principals to support program implementation with fidelity



American Rescue Plan: Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Funding (ARP ESSER III)

In March 2021, Congress passed the American Rescue Act which included \$122 billion dollars to support the safe reopening of schools as well as to address and mitigate the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on students. The ARP ESSER III supplemental funding will provide financial support for Garrett County Public Schools through September 2024 to support continued operation under COVID-related restrictions and to provide targeted recovery efforts specific to student learning and overall well-being. Information specific to the American Rescue Act: Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief funding can be located at the following website: <https://oese.ed.gov/offices/education-stabilization-fund/elementary-secondary-school-emergency-relief-fund/>.

GCPS submitted a grant proposal in August of 2021 to address the safe reopening to full in-person learning and to implement targeted recovery efforts to address learning loss as a result of the pandemic. For more information specific to the ARP ESSER III Funding "[CLICK HERE](#)"

RECOVERY (cont.)



Social Emotional Learning plus Behavioral and Mental Health

- GCPS will utilize teachers and support staff to address the mental health and well-being of all students. Support staff includes School Counselors, School Social Workers, School Psychologists, Behavior Coaches and the Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA). All support staff are assigned to specific schools daily and will help, as needed when mental health needs arise.
- GCPS has increased the number of School Counselors from thirteen to fifteen since the start of the pandemic. Also, the number of School Social Workers has increased from three to five in the same time period.
- Professional development for GCPS staff has included opportunities in key areas of behavior, social/emotional health, restorative practices and trauma-informed care/instruction.
- Aftercare meetings are held by schools when a student has experienced a crisis as a way to help them transition back into the school environment with extra support and interventions as needed.
- GCPS has developed a cohort of staff that are going through the process of becoming certified as either a BCBA (four staff), or Registered Behavior Technicians (twelve staff), to help address the behavioral and mental health needs of our students.
- Social-emotional curriculum and resources such as Second Step and Teaching Social Skills to Youth will be used by teachers and support staff to address and teach to the whole student.
- Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) will be implemented in all schools.
- Individual and group counseling sessions will be provided by School Counselors, School Social Workers, and School Psychologists.
- Community/County partnerships will continue to play an important role in the mental health support in Garrett County Public Schools (i.e Garrett County Health Department, Departments of Juvenile and Social Services, Appalachian Crossroads, and the Dove Center).
- Currently there are six School-Based Therapists that support the schools from the Garrett County Health Department on a daily basis. That support includes, but is not limited to, the following:
 - Individual, group and family therapy to identified clients (during the school year and summer break).
 - Consultation/collaboration at various meetings (IEP, 504, PST, BIP, aftercare, Home & Hospital, PBIS, Back to School nights, parent/teacher conferences, etc.).
 - Psychoeducation and support to school staff regarding mental health concerns.
 - Crisis support to children and families, which can include completion of safety assessments, on an as needed basis.
 - Telepsych services to identified clients for medication evaluations/management.

Attendance

- The Center for Disease Control (2021) states that “students benefit from in-person learning, and safely returning to in-person instruction in Fall 2021 is a priority.” Subsequently, student attendance expectations will follow the guidelines listed in the GCPS Student Rights and Responsibilities Handbook, which can be found by [**"CLICKING HERE"**](#). For all in-person learning, attendance will be recorded in PowerSchool following standard operating procedures.
- See the Emergency Contingency Plan section for attendance procedures should a whole class, grade, school, or the system shifts to virtual only.

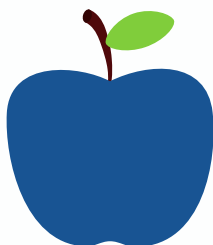
RECOVERY (cont.)

Technology



Students will be provided with age-appropriate technology devices. Pre-kindergarten will be assigned touch screen tablets. Kindergarten - 4th grade will have touch screen Chromebook laptops. Fifth graders will have regular Chromebook laptops. These devices will stay at the school and be charged in the classroom, nightly. Middle school and high school students will receive regular Chromebook laptops, and those devices will be taken home and charged at the student's house, nightly.

Food Services



For the start of the 2023-2024 school year, Garrett County Public Schools Food Service Department plans to return to standard operating procedures. Breakfast and lunch will be served at the schools each day. Breakfast will be served and the students will either eat in the cafeteria or in the classroom based on their school. All lunches will be served and eaten in the cafeteria.

Breakfast and lunch are no longer free to all students. Free and reduced meal applications will be distributed through various means (mail, online, in-person) and all families will be encouraged to apply.

Health Services



- GCPS will continue to ensure nursing coverage for each school as a measure to meet student and staff needs.
- There is a nurse designated for each school to serve as team leader of their school's health services team, delegating to Certified Medication Technicians and Health Room Technicians when appropriate.
- GCPS will maintain health rooms and isolation areas when needed, for students with possible infectious diseases, at each school.
- Protocols for providing routine care for ill students will be followed.
- GCPS will continue to collaborate with the Garrett County Health Department to provide immunization clinics as needed, including COVID-19 and influenza.
- Information about community vaccination clinics, including those for COVID-19 and influenza, will be shared with parents/guardians and staff.

RECOVERY (cont.)



Athletics

Garrett County high school interscholastic sports will follow the MPSSAA calendar.

1

GCPS plans to convene all sports following all state guidelines in place at the time.

2

Spectator capacity and event admissions will follow standard operating procedures.

3

Anyone wishing to participate in extracurricular activities for Northern or Southern High Schools will need a current physical on file with the school's athletic trainer.

Extra-Curricular Activities

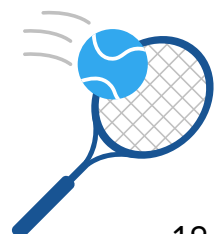
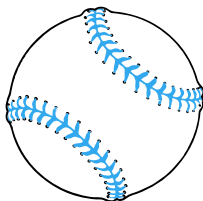
All other extracurricular activities will occur as scheduled throughout the 2023-2024 school year. This includes, but is not limited to band, chorus, robotics, JROTC, FFA, student council, etc. and applies to meetings/practices, travel, and competitions.



For the 2023-2024 school year, Garrett County Public Schools will operate using universal infection control prevention strategies and will layer other mitigation strategies and additional safety protocols, if warranted. The safety protocols shown below can be added as needed or required.

Return to Play Clearance Form:

MPSSAA has updated their guidance on student-athletes returning to athletics after recovering from COVID 19, particularly for moderate or severe symptoms. Please view the updated form and speak to the GCPS athletic trainers if you have any questions or concerns. The MPSSAA Return to Play Clearance Form can be found by "[CLICKING HERE](#)".



RECOVERY (cont.)

Garrett County Public Schools' Wellness Initiatives for Staff

Staff Wellness

Studies show that employees are more likely to be on the job and performing well when they are in optimal health. Garrett County Public Schools (GCPs) believes in creating a culture that enables employees to fully thrive in all aspects of their lives - physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual. Management recognizes the importance of cultivating a high-performing workforce by offering education, training, and incentives that enable employees to achieve optimal health and wellness.

We hope to accomplish this by building a supportive work environment that reinforces the links between positive wellbeing, strong performance, thriving relationships, and increased viability.

GCPs employees have the opportunity to participate in wellness initiatives by completing biometric screenings and Real Age assessments, or by taking part in a non-medical option geared towards healthy habits. Benefits of implementing a wellness program include improved disease management/prevention and a healthier workforce in general, both of which contribute to lower health care costs.



The Wellness Initiatives program provides incentives to encourage employees to take preventative measures to reduce health insurance costs. In addition, the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) helps to identify and resolve personal concerns and provides additional support and resources to assist employees. Some strategies that have been implemented to promote and encourage positive staff wellness have been the following:

- Wellness Initiatives Programs
- Tobacco Cessation Program
- Diabetes Program
- COVID vaccination clinics
- Flu shots
- The Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

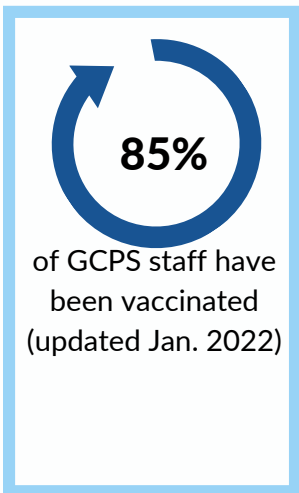
SAFETY PROTOCOLS



Garrett County Public Schools will operate using universal infection control prevention and will layer other mitigation strategies and additional safety protocols if warranted in collaboration with the Garrett County Health Department. Layered mitigation strategies may be implemented based on the COVID-19 hospital admission levels. GCPS protocols will include elements consistent with current guidance from Garrett County Health Department, Maryland Health Department, and the CDC. CDC guidance can be found by "[CLICKING HERE](#)"

Accordingly, Garrett County Public Schools will:

- Teach and reinforce hand washing and respiratory etiquette
- Provide free at-home COVID-19 tests for all students and staff, as available.
- Ensure daily cleaning and disinfection of spaces
- Provide hand sanitizer and disinfectant wipes throughout buildings and in each classroom
- Post safety protocols at each school for visitors should additional mitigation strategies be necessary
- Encourage students and staff to stay home when sick and get tested
- Provide and promote vaccination opportunities in collaboration with GCHD for eligible students and staff
- Continue enhanced ventilation and air quality improvements throughout the school system
- Identify isolation rooms in every school as a safety protocol
- Continue promote schools using outdoor learning spaces



GCPS intends to follow the most recent CDC guidance at the start of the 2023-2024 school year. GCPS will continue to consult with GCHD specific to infectious diseases to determine if additional mitigating measures are needed. See the GCPS COVID 19 Safety Protocols for more information.

Effective March 1, 2022, face coverings will be optional in all GCPS facilities and on GCPS transportation. Any individual may choose to wear a face covering as a safety precaution.

Garrett County Public Schools has created a document titled "COVID 19 Safety Protocols" in an effort to provide specific details about the safety precautions being implemented throughout the system. To locate the **GCPS COVID 19 Safety Protocols document** please "[CLICK HERE](#)"

SAFETY PROTOCOLS (cont.)

Transportation: Face Coverings (Optional)

For the 2023-2024 school year, Garrett County Public Schools will operate using universal infection control prevention strategies and will layer other mitigation strategies and additional safety protocols, if warranted. The previous safety protocols shown below can be added back in as needed or required.

On February 25, 2022, the federal mask order for public school bus transportation was lifted by the CDC. As such, effective March 1, 2022, face-coverings will be optional on GCPS school buses. Individuals may choose to wear a face covering as a safety precaution.



Transportation: Safety Protocols

- Students will have assigned seats.
- Students will be expected to refrain from sharing items while on the bus.
- Students will be encouraged to load and unload the bus in a manner that supports social distancing (i.e. load back to front and unload front to back).
- Ventilation will be increased by opening the roof hatches and windows as weather permits.

Bus Inspections and Cleaning

- GCPS requires increased cleaning and disinfection for buses.
- Each driver will be provided a spray bottle filled with an EPA approved disinfectant and cleaning cloth.
- Bus drivers will clean their buses after morning and afternoon routes using the provided cleaning products.
- Special cleaning emphasis is placed on seats, handles/railing, and window controls.
- Buses are to be inspected by the contractors daily. All buses are formally inspected three times per year; twice by the GCPS inspectors and once by MVA.
- All bus drivers will be trained in safety and transportation protocols on August 24, 2021

Other Transportation Options

- Families are encouraged to drive or walk their children to school, if possible, to reduce the number of students on buses.
- Students that walk to school are highly encouraged to practice social distancing whenever possible.
- High school students that are issued parking permits should not transport other students that do not live in the same household to and from school or after school practices.

Quarantine and Isolation

Quarantine is no longer recommended for schools and Early Childhood Centers per the CDC.

Communication: GCPS will communicate the process for isolation in multiple ways.

- 1.) Students, staff, and the community can locate detailed protocols specific to isolation in the "COVID 19 Safety Protocols" document embedded into the Reopening and Recovery Plan
- 2.) Information on vaccination clinics, free at-home tests, stepping up of mitigation strategies, and safety protocols will be added to the GCPS website and sent out using social media and other means of communication as needed. Information on isolation can be found in the GCPS Reopening and Recovery Plan and Safety Protocol documents on the GCPS homepage.
- 3.) Schools will provide communication as detailed in the "COVID 19 Safety Protocols" guidance to any student needing to isolate.
- 4.) The Human Resources Department and administration will communicate directly with any staff member who is required to isolate.
- 5.) If an employee tests positive for COVID, we will use the results of the COVID home test as evidence for being out for five days in lieu of a doctor's note.
- 6.) GCPS will strive to keep parents, guardians and staff informed as to the latest COVID-19 information.

Delivery of Instruction for Individual Students in Isolation: When a student is absent due to isolation, the school will provide work based on where the instruction is during the school year. Schools will provide student work through posted assignments in Schoology, online resources, paper packets, books, and other resources to help the student stay on track while absent from school. Students will submit work through Schoology or another approved method (when necessary). GCPS will follow standard operating procedures for recording grades for work completed in PowerSchool while students are in isolation. The GCPS make-up work policy will be followed should a student be unable to complete work while in isolation. GCPS will ensure that all students have access to a device. If the entire class, grade, school, or school system is moved to virtual-only instruction, synchronous instruction aligned with the emergency contingency plan will be followed. Please see the access and equity section for the continuity of instruction delivery for students with service plans during isolation.

Support Staff: Each Garrett County Public School will provide appropriate supports to ensure that students' needs are met when they are absent from school following our standard operational procedures.



Quarantine and Isolation (cont.)

Recording Attendance for Individual Students in Isolation

Attendance: GCPS will follow standard operating procedures for recording attendance and student absences due to illness as detailed in the [Students Rights and Responsibilities Handbook](#). A code 17 (Health Exclusion) will be assigned for any student required to isolate. This is an excused absence and missed work can be made up based on the GCPS Student Handbook make-up work regulations.

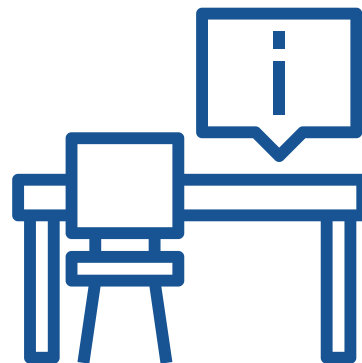


Technology Support: The GCPS technology help desk will be available Monday-Friday from 8:00-4:00 to help any student who needs assistance with their device or with accessing the internet should the system move to a full virtual learning model. Please use the following phone number to contact the help desk directly: 1-888-285-7254. The help desk can also be reached at helpdesk@garrettcountyschools.org

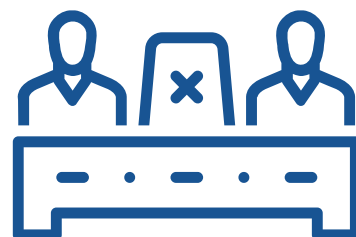
Quarantine and Isolation (cont.)

Monitoring Procedures to Engage Consistently Absent/Disengaged Students

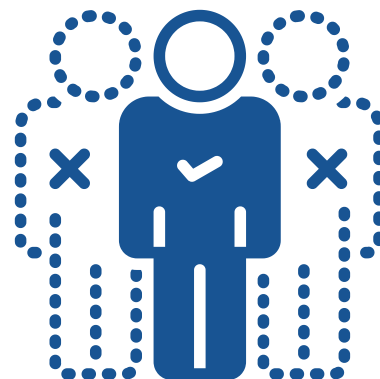
1. Parents of students shall be informed on a regular basis by progress reports and/or report cards of the student absentee record. Parents may also be notified through means such as parent notes, teacher notes in student planners and telephone calls. The school administration will notify parents when a student accumulates a total of eight (8) days of absences for elementary, middle and high school year- long classes or four (4) days for high school semester classes. The school administration shall also notify the school's Pupil Personnel Worker.



2. An investigation shall be conducted by the appropriate school staff and/or referred to the Pupil Personnel Worker for any student whose total absences for illness exceed eight (8) days for elementary, middle and high school year long classes or four (4) days for high school semester classes. If the investigation reveals questionable absences (Code 03, 20, 21, 22), the parent will be required to subsequently furnish a doctor's certificate for absences. If this course of action becomes a requirement, any subsequent absence for illness without a doctor's certificate would be listed under the unlawful category. This procedure will remain in effect for the remainder of the school year.



3. Unlawful absences - Student absences will be specifically monitored for unlawful excuses (refer to D.2.a-c, Codes 20, 21, and 22). Parents will be notified when a student accumulates a total of three (3) unlawful absences for elementary, middle and high school year long classes or two (2) days of unlawful absences for high school semester classes. The school administration will also notify the School's Pupil Personnel Worker. Students will be referred to the Student Services Office for investigation and case management when the student accumulates four (4) unlawful absences for elementary, middle and high school year long classes or three (3) days of unlawful absences for high school semester classes. This referral will include documentation by the school administration of parent notification and a parent conference or other face-to-face parent contact (home visit, etc.), or documented attempts of these contacts.



4. Each school's Student Services Team will regularly monitor those students whose absences, both lawful and unlawful, are affecting their learning and promotion to the next grade. Interventions and strategies to address attendance concerns will be addressed and documented by the school and Student Services Team using tiered interventions of Response to Intervention (RTI).

Quarantine and Isolation (cont.)

Monitoring Procedures to Engage Consistently Absent/Disengaged Students

The following steps will be initiated to address attendance concerns:

1. Student conference, school staff contact with parent/guardian, school conference with the parent and student, and individual and/or group counseling.
2. Scheduled intervention periods/assigned classes to support missed instruction and academic deficits.
3. Written school notification to parent/guardian when the student has three (3) unlawful absences, or eight (8) total absences for year long classes or two (2) unlawful or four (4) total absences for semester classes (high school).
4. School notification of the Pupil Personnel Worker when the student has four (4) unlawful or eight (8) total absences for year long classes or three (3) unlawful or four (4) total absences for semester classes (high school).
5. Scheduled school conference with the Pupil Personnel Worker, School Social Worker, and/or involved school staff, which may include the teacher, school administrator, CTE Case Manager Drop-out Prevention Specialist (high school), School Nurse, School Psychologist, School Counselor, community agency staff, and the parent/guardian and student.
6. Pupil Personnel Worker in conjunction with the school administration may determine to require doctor notes for any additional excused absences for illness.
7. Additional scheduled school conferences with the above staff, parents/guardians and the student. If parent/guardian and student conferences have not been attended by the parent/guardian, phone contacts, and/or home visits with referrals to agencies to provide resources for the parents/guardians and student will be recommended and documented.
8. If a home visit has not been completed, the Pupil Personnel Worker, School Social Worker and/or the CTE Case Manager/Drop-out Prevention Specialist (high school) and/or other school staff, will do one.
9. If the above interventions have not been successful, the Pupil Personnel Worker will complete a referral that documents the above interventions to the State Attorney's Office for possible court action for those students under the compulsory attendance age who have exceeded the number of unlawful absences. Copies of the referral will also be sent to the Departments of Juvenile Services and Social Services.

Isolation specific to a COVID 19 outbreak

The Maryland Department of Health has identified new K-12 Outbreak Definitions for a classroom/cohort outbreak and for a school-wide outbreak.

- **Classroom/cohort outbreak definition:** Three or more COVID-19 cases among students/teachers/staff in a specified group with onsets (or, if asymptomatic, collection dates) within a 10-day period, and who are epidemiologically linked in the school setting, but not household contacts.
- **School-wide outbreak definition:** Five or more cohorts with cases from separate households that meet the classroom/cohort outbreak definition that occurs within 10 days; OR 5% or more unrelated students/teachers/staff that have COVID-19 within a 10-day period [minimum of 10 unrelated students/teachers/staff].

GCPS will continue to follow existing procedures for reporting communicable diseases (COMAR 10.06.01) and immediately notify the local health department of a COVID-19 outbreak. The local health department will recommend control measures in response to the outbreak, including prevention strategies.

Emergency Contingency Plan

The Maryland State Board Resolution that was released this past spring stated, beginning with the opening of schools for the 2021-2022 school year, local boards of education must permit all students to attend school for at least 180 actual school days and a minimum of 1,080 school hours during a 10-month period for in-person, in-school instruction, with the teacher in the classroom.

If circumstances require GCPS to deviate from in-person learning to virtual learning for an entire class, grade level, school, or the school system for a period of time, GCPS will:



Deploy laptops to elementary students. Secondary students will already have access to their school laptop

Deploy hotspots to students without internet access at home

Deliver instruction via the Schoology Learning Platform and Google Meet Platform

Emergency Contingency Plan (Cont.)

Virtual Instructional Schedules

It is important to note that live synchronous instruction will occur through Google Meets daily Monday- Friday should a class, grade level, school, or the system have to shift to virtual instruction due to COVID 19. If virtual learning is implemented, all students will follow their regular daily schedule Monday- Friday. As such, live synchronous instruction will follow the student's traditional schedule. Teachers will integrate breaks as appropriate. Schools and teachers will communicate and publish the daily schedule for students and families. Following the student's regular schedule will allow for consistency for students, families, and teachers along with a seamless transition to and from in-person learning.

Contingency Virtual Attendance Protocols

If a whole class, grade, school, or school system has to shift to virtual learning due to COVID 19, then synchronous instruction will occur daily through Google Meets according to the normal schedule for both elementary and secondary levels.

The Maryland State Department of Education requires that all school systems track student attendance during face-to-face and virtual learning. Taking attendance while students are learning from home will assist school staff in ensuring that all students have the resources and support they need to engage in learning. Tracking attendance will include a combination of measures that indicate a student is demonstrating engagement in learning and will be tracked using the county's student management system, PowerSchool. This is not indicative of the degree to which the student understands the content nor his or her grade in class, rather it is documentation of a student's engagement in the learning process. Daily attendance will be recorded by each teacher in PowerSchool.

Definitions

Present ~ a student will be marked as present when there is evidence of daily engagement in one of the factors listed below:

- Attending classes via Google Meet (must have their cameras turned on)
- Submission of assignments in Schoology or other approved submission method
- Participation in work-based learning/internships (high school only)

Absent ~ a student will be marked as absent when there is not evidence of any daily engagement in the factors listed below:

- Attending classes via Google Meet
- Not turning on their camera during the Google Meet
- Submission of assignments in Schoology or other approved submission method
- Participation in work-based learning/internships (high school only)

Lawful Absence ~ Students shall be considered lawfully absent when absent from instruction with proper documentation approved by the principal/designee.

- If a student has a lawful absence and is unable to attend the live Google Meets or complete their assignments/work, the school should be contacted and the policy on make-up work from the GCPS Student Handbook will be followed upon return to in-person learning.

Unlawful Absence ~ Students shall be considered unlawfully absent when absent from instruction without submitting an absence note to the principal/designee.

Emergency Contingency Plan (Cont.)

Contingency Virtual Attendance Protocols (cont.)

Absence Notes:

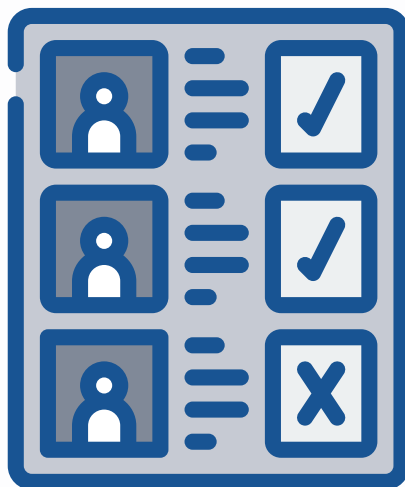
- An absence for any reason other than those cited as lawful is presumed to be unlawful unless a note stating the reason is submitted and approved by the principal/designee within the same term of the absence.
- Each school will publicize an attendance email account (secretary, attendance secretary, etc.) to allow for parents/guardians to document the reason for student absences. Signed parent and physician notes are also still acceptable.

Teacher/Staff Expectation:

- All teachers will have a daily assignment (class work, assessment, exit ticket etc.) linked to each day in addition to other course work with specified due dates.
- All teachers are expected to maintain and document student attendance within a 24 hour period of time (ex: Monday's attendance should be completed by the end of the day on Tuesday).
- All teachers will monitor engagement in Google Meets and informally take attendance daily based on engagement in live virtual sessions and work completion. Google Meet provides an emailed roster of attendance to teachers after each Google Meet. This allows teachers easy access to those who were in attendance.

COVID Related Absences

GCPS will follow standard operating procedures for recording attendance and student absences due to illness as detailed in the Students Rights and Responsibilities Handbook. A code 17 (Health Exclusion) will be assigned for any student required to isolate. This is an excused absence and missed work can be made up based on the GCPS Student Handbook make-up work regulations.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Please access the link below to see frequently asked questions and responses.

["Click Here"](#)

