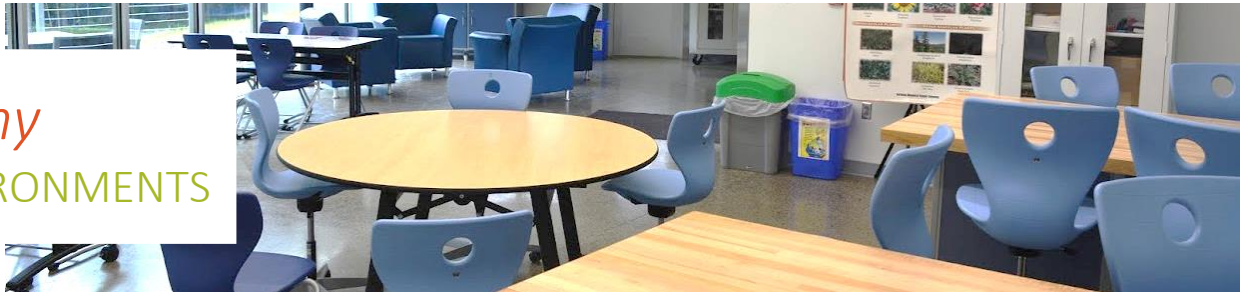# RETURN TO SCHOOL PLANNING GUIDE

Healthy
ENVIRONMENTS

Healthy
STAFF

Healthy
STUDENTS

Healthy
LEARNING

ALBEMARLE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Return to School Task Force

Albemarle County
Public Schools

Return to School Task Force

Debora Collins, Chair
DEPUTY SUPERINTENDENT

Clare Keiser, Ed.D.
ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT FOR ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND HUMAN RESOURCE LEADERSHIP

Rosalyn Schmitt
CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER

Jamie Foreman
DEPUTY CHIEF TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION OFFICER

Kevin Kirst
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF SPECIAL EDUCATION & STUDENT SERVICES

Michele Castner
DIRECTOR OF ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

Jay Thomas
DIRECTOR OF SECONDARY EDUCATION

Gwedette Crummie
PRINCIPAL, CROZET ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Craig Dommer
PRINCIPAL, HOLLYMEAD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Ashby Johnson
PRINCIPAL, JACK JOUETT MIDDLE SCHOOL

Rick Vrhovac
PRINCIPAL, MONTICELLO HIGH SCHOOL

Jennifer Butler
SENIOR COMMUNICATIONS ANALYST, OFFICE OF STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS

Matthew S. Haas, Ed.D.
SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

Albemarle County Public Schools
401 McIntire Road, Charlottesville, VA 22902

434-296-5820 | www.k12albemarle.org

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Introduction

On March 13, 2020, Virginia Governor Ralph Northam ordered all K-12 schools in Virginia to close for a minimum of two weeks, March 16-27, due to the spread of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). Four days later on March 17, 2020, Albemarle County Public Schools (ACPS) Superintendent Matthew Haas announced that all schools in the division would remain closed through at least April 10. Then, on March 23, 2020, to protect the health and safety of Virginians and reduce the spread of COVID-19, Governor Northam ordered all K-12 schools to remain closed through the end of the 2019-20 academic year.

By mid-May, as communities across our state began entering Phase One of the governor's "Forward Virginia" plan to safely and gradually ease public health restrictions, ACPS was already immersed in planning for the eventual reopening of schools. In early May, in anticipation of opening schools for the 2020-21 school year, ACPS convened a "Return to School Task Force" to craft initial guidance to support a safe and welcoming return to school for students, teachers, support staff, and visitors.

At the direction of the superintendent, the Return to School Task Force included 12 members representing a cross-functional team of division, school and department leadership. The broader work of the task force hinged on facilitating four complementary work groups, each composed of 16 to 25 staff members offering diverse expertise and representing multiple schools and departments across the division. Over the course of about four weeks, each work group engaged in research and discussion to generate guidance focused in a particular area. The four focus areas addressed by the work groups include healthy environments, healthy staff, healthy students, and healthy learning.

The product of this work is the "Return to School Planning Guide," which aims to provide a framework to guide the division's ongoing and comprehensive planning efforts to safely, successfully and equitably reopen our schools in alignment with guidance we receive from public health officials and the Virginia Department of Education.

The guide is organized by the four focus areas of our work groups—healthy environments, healthy staff, healthy students, and healthy learning. Each section includes the following information:

- A **Statement of Purpose** describing the primary objective of the work group within the scope of crafting preliminary guidance to support the reopening of schools amidst a pandemic and unprecedented public health restrictions;
- The **Areas of Focus** addressed by the guidance in the section;
- A list of **Guiding Questions** used by the work group to focus their collaborative efforts and produce relevant guidance; and
- Recommended **Key Strategies** in response to the Guiding Questions.

The "Return to School Planning Guide" is not intended to provide detailed guidance for reopening schools; rather, its purpose is to provide a starting point—a foundation—from which ACPS can begin to navigate the various challenges involved in reopening schools while supporting specific priorities, including a safe and healthy physical environment for all; the health, safety and well-being of our students and staff; and high-quality teaching and learning.

Contributions and Acknowledgments

The "Return to School Planning Guide" is the collaborative product of more than 80 ACPS employees who serve the school division in various capacities. The Return to School Task Force sincerely thanks all staff who contributed to the important work of the four task force work groups. We appreciate the enthusiastic dedication with which you have served our students and their families, your colleagues, and our community members.

The task force would also like to take this opportunity to thank the various advisory groups that participated in our review process. In an effort to improve our planning, the Return to School Task Force invited multiple internal and external advisory groups to review an initial draft of the "Return to School Planning Guide" and provide input. The task force welcomed general assessments, but also attempted to solicit more specific feedback around five key questions:

1. Does the organization of the planning guide make it easy to navigate content and find information?
2. Is the content presented in the planning guide coherent and useful?
3. Does the planning guide demonstrate that the school division is investing itself in planning that prioritizes the health, safety and well-being of students, staff and the community?
4. What significant information should the planning guide address that currently is not included?
5. What questions or concerns do you have after reviewing the planning guide?

The task force recognizes the essential role that advisory groups play in the school division's evaluative processes, and we thank everyone who participated in our review process for your partnership. The valuable perspectives and suggestions you shared enhanced the guidance the task force was able to offer.

In the lists that follow, the Return to School Task Force has acknowledged the individual members of each work group as well as the internal and external advisory groups that contributed to the guidance offered in the "Return to School Planning Guide."

Task Force Work Groups

HEALTHY ENVIRONMENTS

Rosalyn Schmitt, Lead Facilitator | CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER
Rick Vrhovac, Task Force Principal Representative | PRINCIPAL, MONTICELLO HIGH SCHOOL

Tim Driver
ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL,
WESTERN ALBEMARLE HIGH SCHOOL

Josh Flaherty
TEACHER,
COMMUNITY PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL

Jim Foley
DIRECTOR OF TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

Laura Gaskins
SCHOOL COUNSELOR,
MONTICELLO HIGH SCHOOL

Eileen Gomez
SCHOOL HEALTH COORDINATOR/SCHOOL
NURSE, HOLLYMEAD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Steve Heon
ATHLETIC DIRECTOR,
WESTERN ALBEMARLE HIGH SCHOOL

Joe Letteri
DIRECTOR OF BUILDING SERVICES

Tireese Lewis
ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL,
BURLEY MIDDLE SCHOOL

Meagan Maynard
LEAD COACH,
CAREER & TECHNICAL EDUCATION

Lisa Molinaro
LEAD COACH, PRESCHOOL AND
RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION

Christina Pitsenberger
DIRECTOR OF CHILD NUTRITION

Ashley Redmond
TEACHER,
STONE-ROBINSON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Brandi Robertson
ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL,
BROWNSVILLE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Lindsay Snoddy
DEPUTY DIRECTOR, BUILDING SERVICES

Ruth Tapscott
COORDINATOR OF SPECIAL EDUCATION

Terry Tomlin
SCHOOL NURSE, MONTICELLO HIGH SCHOOL

HEALTHY STAFF

Clare Keiser, Ed.D., Lead Facilitator | ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT
Craig Dommer, Task Force Principal Representative | PRINCIPAL, HOLLYMEAD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Reva Allen
TEACHER,
SCOTTSVILLE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Ross Holden
SCHOOL BOARD ATTORNEY

Sherica Jones-Lewis, Ed.D.
ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL,
WALTON MIDDLE SCHOOL

Daphne Keiser, Ph.D.
DIRECTOR OF EDUCATOR QUALITY

Cheryl Knight
TEACHER, MURRAY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL/
ALBEMARLE EDUCATION ASSOCIATION (AEA)
REPRESENTATIVE

LeAnn Knox
SAFETY AND WELLNESS PROGRAM
MANAGER, HUMAN RESOURCES

Bryant Loving
LEAD CUSTODIAN,
HOLLYMEAD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Davra Miller
HUMAN RESOURCES GENERALIST

Sandra Mitchell
OFFICE ASSOCIATE,
HOLLYMEAD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Hope Peritz
SCHOOL NURSE, DIVISION-WIDE FLOATER

Kelvin Reid
DIRECTOR OF EXTENDED DAY ENRICHMENT
PROGRAMS

William Shifflett
FLEET OPERATIONS MANAGER,
TRANSPORTATION

Ruth Tapscott
COORDINATOR OF SPECIAL EDUCATION

Steven Turner
TEACHER, ALBEMARLE HIGH SCHOOL

HEALTHY STUDENTS

Jay Thomas, Lead Facilitator | DIRECTOR OF SECONDARY EDUCATION
Ashby Johnson, Task Force Principal Representative | PRINCIPAL, JACK JOUETT MIDDLE SCHOOL

Regina Anderson
TEACHER, CALE/MOUNTAIN VIEW
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Patricia Demitry
ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL,
MONTICELLO HIGH SCHOOL

Suzanne Fladd
COORDINATOR OF SPECIAL EDUCATION

Kim Gibson
INSTRUCTIONAL COACH

Eileen Gomez
SCHOOL HEALTH COORDINATOR/SCHOOL
NURSE, HOLLYMEAD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Meredith Holmes
TEACHER, SUTHERLAND MIDDLE SCHOOL

Maureen Jensen
LEAD COACH, GIFTED EDUCATION AND
LANGUAGE ARTS (6-12)

Paul Jones
SCHOOL COUNSELOR,
MONTICELLO HIGH SCHOOL

Nicholas King, Ed.D.
DIRECTOR OF STUDENT SERVICES

Kristy Lancaster
SCHOOL COUNSELOR,
HENLEY MIDDLE SCHOOL

Vernon Liechti
TEACHER, ALBEMARLE HIGH SCHOOL

Patricia Mariscal
TEACHER, JACK JOUETT MIDDLE SCHOOL

Miles Nelson
SCHOOL COUNSELOR,
BAKER-BUTLER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Steve Saunders, Ph.D.
PRINCIPAL, GREER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Meghan Streit
TEACHER,
WESTERN ALBEMARLE HIGH SCHOOL

Deb Tyson
ATHLETIC DIRECTOR,
ALBEMARLE HIGH SCHOOL

Kristen Williams
PRINCIPAL,
WOODBROOK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Leslie Wills-Taylor
ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL,
MERIWETHER LEWIS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

HEALTHY LEARNING

Michele Castner, Lead Facilitator | DIRECTOR OF ELEMENTARY EDUCATION
Gwedette Crummie, Task Force Principal Representative | PRINCIPAL, CROZET ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Jennifer Bedenk
TEACHER,
BAKER-BUTLER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Rusty Carlock, Ed.D.
TEACHER, ALBEMARLE HIGH SCHOOL

Stephanie Carter
DIRECTOR, CATEC

Emily Elliott
INSTRUCTIONAL LIAISON, ESOL

Natalie Farrell
LEAD COACH, MATH

Forrest Garrison
TEACHER,
WESTERN ALBEMARLE HIGH SCHOOL

Reed Gillespie
ASSOCIATE PRINCIPAL,
MONTICELLO HIGH SCHOOL

India Haun
DIRECTOR OF ACCOUNTABILITY & RESEARCH

John Hobson
LEAD COACH, SOCIAL STUDIES

Seth Kennard
PRINCIPAL,
BAKER-BUTLER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Kimberly Link
WORK & COMMUNITY BASED LEARNING
COORDINATOR

Meagan Maynard
LEAD COACH,
CAREER & TECHNICAL EDUCATION

Mindy Moran, Ed.D.
LEAD COACH, FINE AND PERFORMING ARTS

Nancy McCullen
PRINCIPAL, RED HILL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Gene Osborn
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR FOR TECHNOLOGY
INTEGRATION

Jeff Prillaman
STUDENT CENTER DESIGNER

Dama Schneider
TEACHER, SUTHERLAND MIDDLE SCHOOL

Adam Seipel
LEARNING TECHNOLOGY INTEGRATOR

Catrina Sims
LEAD COACH, LANGUAGE ARTS (K-5) AND
TITLE I

Lucy Spencer
LEARNING TECHNOLOGY INTEGRATOR

Elizabeth Strauss
TEACHER,
BROADUS WOOD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Jennifer Sublette
DIRECTOR OF PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Megan Wood
PRINCIPAL, SUTHERLAND MIDDLE SCHOOL

Advisory Groups

Albemarle County School Board

Albemarle Education Association

Classified Employee Advisory Committee

Division-Level Leadership Team

Equity Specialist Team

Parent Council

School Health Advisory Board

Special Education Advisory Committee

Superintendent's Cabinet

Teacher Advisory Committee

Thomas Jefferson Health District

Healthy Environments

Statement of Purpose

Develop practices, protocols and guidelines that support a healthy and safe physical environment for students, staff, and community members and align with public health guidance.

Areas of Focus

- Cleaning, disinfection and ventilation
- Buildings and grounds
- Transportation
- Response to confirmed cases of COVID-19

Guiding Questions

1. What cleaning, disinfection and ventilation protocols will we establish to ensure safe and healthy school environments?
2. How will we optimize and modify our buildings and grounds and related procedures to safeguard the health of occupants?
3. How will we ensure safe and healthy transportation for all to and from our schools?
4. How should we respond when a confirmed case of COVID-19 has entered a school or building?

Key Strategies

CLEANING, DISINFECTION AND VENTILATION

We will routinely clean and disinfect shared spaces and high-touch surfaces.

- We will use teachers and other staff to clean and disinfect shared technology and high-touch surfaces, minimally including interior and exterior door handles, cafeteria tables and chairs, phones, copiers, and handrails, throughout the day and before and after meals and snacks.
- We will clean and disinfect restrooms at an increased frequency.
- We will disinfect clinic and isolation room surfaces frequently throughout the day and between users.
- We will follow established protocols for cleaning and disinfection of shared spaces and surfaces, to be performed by Building Services staff each evening.
- We will minimize soft furnishings, floor coverings (e.g., rugs), and surface clutter in order to facilitate proper disinfection.
- We will use disinfectant products that are approved by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for effective use against SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19.

We will implement protocols for building operations to reduce potential exposure to COVID-19.

- We will endeavor to minimize the sharing of equipment, technology, and learning materials.
- We will require students who feel ill to wear a mask while in the clinic to minimize the spread of respiratory droplets leading to surface contamination.
- We will establish isolation rooms to care for symptomatic students until they are picked up.
- We will improve indoor air quality by increasing outdoor air ventilation.
- We will ventilate the buildings before and after occupancy.
- We will use High Efficiency Particulate Air (HEPA) filtration units in clinics.
- We will open operable windows when outside temperature and humidity allow.

BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS

We will promote health and safety practices; minimize contact between building occupants; and limit sharing of equipment and surfaces.

Regarding hallways, we will:

- Establish traffic patterns using signage and floor markings to promote one-way traffic during peak times.
- Stagger arrival and dismissal times and class changes.
- Require use of personal water bottles or cups to prevent direct drinking from water fountains and/or consider disabling water fountains.
- Use signage to promote handwashing and appropriate social distancing as recommended by public health officials.
- Eliminate use of lockers.

Regarding classrooms and learning spaces, we will:

- Limit the number of occupants.
- Position workspaces (e.g., desks, tables) and seating in compliance with recommendations by public health officials.
- Install hand sanitizer stations.
- Require washing or sanitizing of hands upon entry and exit.
- Prop open doors during entrance and exit times and close doors at all other times.
- Repurpose non-traditional learning spaces (e.g., auditoriums, cafeterias, outdoor spaces) and spaces traditionally reserved for "specials" (e.g., art, physical education, library, music), as needed and wherever feasible, to serve the learning needs of students in an environment that enables appropriate social distancing.

Regarding cafeterias, we will:

- Repurpose as classroom space, if needed.
- Arrange for students to consume meals (breakfast and lunch) in their classrooms, if possible.
- Stagger meal schedules, as needed, to limit the number of occupants at any given time.
- Install hand sanitizer stations.
- Require washing or sanitizing of hands upon entry and exit.
- Consider food allergies when designating eating locations.

Regarding main offices, we will:

- Require staff, students and visitors to use hand sanitizer upon entry and exit.
- Position work stations in compliance with recommendations by public health officials.
- Install clear plastic shields in front of reception desks.
- Limit transaction time between office staff and students, other staff, and visitors.

Regarding clinics, we will:

- Position beds at a distance in compliance with recommendations by public health officials.
- Establish a separate isolation room for symptomatic individuals until they can be picked up.
- Consider repurposing other spaces to provide adequate space for the clinic and isolation room.

Regarding bathrooms, we will:

- Require washing or sanitizing of hands upon entry and exit.
- Use signage to promote proper handwashing.
- Limit the number of occupants at any given time based on the size of the bathroom.
- Label the floor to accommodate waiting space that observes appropriate social distancing.

Regarding building entrances and exits, we will:

- Designate and clearly label doors as entrances or exits.
- Prop open doors during arrival and dismissal times and close doors at all other times.
- Use multiple points of entry and exit or stagger schedules to lessen the number of people entering and exiting at the same time.
- Install hand sanitizer stations.

Regarding locker rooms, we will:

- Limit occupancy and use.

Regarding playgrounds, we will:

- Either close or stagger use during school hours.
- Continue policy of prohibiting public use during school hours.
- Develop policy to manage public use after hours and on weekends.

Regarding visitors, we will:

- Restrict non-essential visitors and volunteers from entering our buildings.
- Develop community use policies to manage use of school facilities after hours and on weekends.

We will proactively communicate with stakeholders, including students, parents and guardians, employees, and community members, regarding building safety.

- We will utilize age-appropriate signage and labels as follows:
    - Over sinks to encourage proper handwashing;
    - Throughout hallways, in offices, and in clinics to encourage wearing masks;
    - On water fountains to deter use;
    - On floors to indicate traffic patterns;
    - On doors to clearly indicate entrances and exits;
    - Outside of buildings to provide procedural reminders; and
    - In learning spaces to promote practices recommended by public health officials, such as social distancing, handwashing, and wearing masks.
- We will communicate the following to students, parents and guardians, employees, and community members as needed:
    - Supply lists for students;
    - Expectations for mask use; and
    - Procedures and expectations for building occupants.

TRANSPORTATION

We will ensure our school buses provide a safe transportation option for all users.

- We will routinely disinfect buses prior to and after transporting students, including frequently touched surfaces like seats and handrails.
- We will provide all students and staff with proper personal protective equipment (PPE) in accordance with public health recommendations, which may require or encourage riders to wear masks while being transported.
- We will equip all buses with hand sanitizer and disinfectant wipes or spray.
- We will limit bus capacity to provide physical distance between riders.
- We will permit students who live in the same household to sit together in a single seat.
- We will seat students back-to-front when boarding and dismiss students front-to-back when disembarking to minimize the need for students to pass one another on the bus.
- We will assign seats on our buses to ensure student safety throughout the ride.
- We will provide transportation only to the students registered for each bus route.
- We will partner with families to make sure that social distancing guidelines are observed at bus stops.
- We will enforce all established ACPS guidelines for safe transportation jointly with public health guidelines.
- We will communicate expectations of students and families to promote safe transportation.
- We will work closely with the family of any child who puts others at risk.

We will work to identify and meet the transportation needs of all students.

- We will work closely with families to identify their transportation needs and intentions by semester.
- We will communicate expectations for using alternate bus stops, as needed.
- We will partner with the Department of Special Education to ensure that we meet the needs of students with disabilities and the expectations of their Individualized Education Program (IEP).
- We will make every effort to abide by public health guidelines as we strive to accommodate any specialized transportation needs.
- We will communicate plans for transportation to non-ACPS after-school programs, as some of those programs may be impacted by health and safety restrictions.

We will create and communicate plans to manage an increase in the number of families who choose to drop off and pick up their children.

- We will increase staff to support traffic control.
- We will stagger schedules to ensure safe conditions and an efficient process for drop-off and pick-up.
- We will communicate schedules and processes to families.

We will proactively communicate ACPS guidelines for safe transportation with schools and families in a variety of ways.

- We will ensure families have access to ACPS guidelines for safe transportation, including new health and safety protocols.
- We will share any changes to ACPS guidelines for safe transportation as public health and safety restrictions shift.

RESPONSE TO CONFIRMED CASES OF COVID-19

We will implement a response plan if a person infected with COVID-19 has entered a school building.

- We will work with local health officials to develop a response plan for confirmed cases prior to the reopening of school, and we will communicate this plan to our community.
- We will coordinate with local health officials to determine a course of action if a person infected with COVID-19 has entered a school building.
- We will communicate dismissal decisions and possible COVID-19 exposure with staff, parents and students.
- We will maintain confidentiality during contact tracing efforts and communication.
- We will make decisions about extending a school dismissal in coordination with local health officials.
- We will implement strategies to continue education and related supports for students during a school closure, to include continuity of education, meal programs, and necessary services for children.

Healthy Staff

Statement of Purpose

Recognize the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on various communities represented by our staff and develop protocols, guidelines, and training resources that support a safe and healthy return to work for all employees and align with current laws, policies, and authoritative COVID-19 guidance.

Areas of Focus

- Physical health and safety
- Mental health and wellness
- Professional development
- Attendance and leave

Guiding Questions

1. What safeguards should be in place to help staff be physically safe?
2. How do we provide support to the staff community, as well as to individuals?
3. How will we ensure staff are prepared to support the health and well-being of students, staff, and other stakeholders?
4. How will we apply and interpret federal and state law and School Board policy to address leave and attendance matters?

Key Strategies

PHYSICAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

We will ensure measures are in place to help keep employees as safe as possible.

- We will, on a daily basis, require each employee to perform a self-assessment before entering the school/workplace to affirm that they are not experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 and have not, to their knowledge, been exposed to the virus.
- We will encourage practices in the workplace that promote social distancing whenever feasible, such as the use of teleconferences, teleworking, staggered shifts and schedules, and minimizing the sharing of workspaces, phones and equipment.
- We will instruct employees on important health and safety measures, and we will use signage to provide reminders on proper handwashing and hand sanitizing technique, how to use face coverings, and the importance of social distancing.
- We will clean and disinfect high-touch surfaces and provide cleaning materials for staff to use between student interactions and in their work areas.
- We will, when indicated, cooperate with local health officials on infection control and contact tracing efforts.

We will equip employees with appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) and require use according to public health guidelines to minimize the spread of COVID-19.

- We will follow public health guidelines on use, training and cleaning of PPE and face coverings for each employee group and department.
- We will require employees to identify any underlying health issues or concerns, or potential safety issues, related to the use of PPE in their work environment.

We will minimize risk to employees who interact with students.

- We will limit the number of individuals in rooms, vehicles, and other spaces to enable appropriate social distancing.
- We will manage high-traffic areas by using alternate entrances and exits and barriers where necessary.
- We will, in accordance with public health guidelines, create safe spaces that are visible by the nurse or designee where we can isolate students and staff who are suspected or known to be ill.
- We will minimize exposure to potentially ill individuals by restricting access to clinics and isolation areas to nursing personnel and designees.

We will implement safety measures to protect employees during interactions with students, staff, parents, customers, vendors, and other visitors.

- We will, as much as possible, limit close physical contact during all interactions.
- We will develop a process for responding to customer needs through electronic and other remote means that limit physical interaction.
- We will develop a plan for how to safely receive supplies, packages and mail.

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS

We will make mental health resources available to staff.

- We will utilize the Albemarle County Human Resources "BeWell Albemarle" website to provide employees with vetted information and resources pertaining to mental health and well-being.
- We will use existing "Wellness Champions" to facilitate two-way communication between staff and Human Resources.
- We will use existing employee communication channels to highlight mental health resources.

We will monitor and promote individual and community mental health in a positive work environment.

- We will work with school and department leadership to administer an employee "Check and Connect" program (with an opt-out option) intended to connect staff in a peer-to-peer structure; monitor and promote well-being; and provide staff with support and advocacy.
- We will encourage principals and key leaders to participate in training focused on secondary trauma and responding to individuals experiencing mental distress.

- We will equip principals and key leaders with information needed to direct staff to appropriate mental health services and resources, as follows:
  - o We will recommend that principals and key leaders create an account with GuidanceResources, our Employee Assistance Program (EAP) provider, and familiarize themselves with the resources available and steps required to request mental health support.
  - o We will develop a protocol for leaders to use when they are concerned about an employee's mental health or well-being.
- We will promote community health through a collaborative process that engages employees in conversations about mental health and provides opportunities for employees to provide feedback, such as a survey and a virtual comment box.
- We will foster a positive climate in the workplace that supports well-being by encouraging staff to engage in personal connections throughout the work day, providing time and space for staff connections, and implementing procedures that will enable teachers to step away from the classroom when they need a break.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

We will develop and deliver professional development opportunities, as appropriate, in response to guidance provided by the state department of education and public health officials.

- We will target professional development opportunities based on phases of reopening, the needs of students, and methods of learning instruction.
- We will engage instructional coaches and learning technology integrators, when appropriate, to provide targeted professional development.
- We will use existing employee communication channels to publicize professional development opportunities.

We will educate and train employees, as needed, to reinforce physical health and safety practices and procedures.

- We will provide clear guidance and professional development at the school and building levels regarding health and safety expectations and operational changes.
- We will supply guided lessons to assist teachers with instruction on handwashing, social distancing, and other health and safety expectations and procedures.
- We will provide all bus drivers with professional development, in advance of transporting students, to inform them of new protocols and procedures and ensure they understand how to effectively clean and prepare their buses for students and staff.

We will educate and train employees, as needed, to support the mental health and wellness of students and colleagues.

- We will offer opportunities to all employees to participate in professional development that focuses on promoting well-being and recognizing mental health struggles in others.
- We will regularly update and share useful mental health and social and emotional learning (SEL) resources with staff.
- We will prepare teachers to respond to questions from students and facilitate conversations with students about COVID-19 and its impact on our lives and our communities.

ATTENDANCE AND LEAVE

We will advise employees of leave options and accommodations available to them if they cannot work because they have COVID-19 symptoms, are in a high-risk category, or lack child care due to the closure or unavailability of school or child care facilities.

- We will inform employees that, through December 21, 2020, they may qualify for paid leave under the Families First Coronavirus Relief Act (FFCRA), including Emergency Paid Sick Leave (EPSL) or Expanded Family Medical Leave (EFML).
- We will notify employees that once they have exhausted leave through the FFCRA, they may use leave balances allocated by School Board Policy GCC, *Leave Program*, or, if appropriate, apply for Family Medical Leave (FML).
- We will notify employees that they may request a short-term or long-term leave of absence per School Board Policy GCC, *Leave Program*.
- We will make sure employees know that they may apply for accommodations that will allow them to work.

We will advise employees of their options if they have trepidation about returning to work, but do not have COVID-19 symptoms, are not in a high-risk category, and for whom child care is not relevant.

- We will make sure employees know that they may apply for accommodations that will allow them to work.
- We will notify employees that they may use leave balances allocated by School Board Policy GCC, *Leave Program*, or, if appropriate, apply for FML.
- We will notify employees that they may request a short-term or long-term leave of absence per School Board Policy GCC, *Leave Program*.

We will ensure employees have access to learn about leave options available through FFCRA, FML, and ACPS.

- We will publish leave options for employees that list and describe available leave options, including qualifying conditions; rules for use, application and eligibility; and requirements.

We will supply relevant return to work guidance to substitutes and other temporary employees.

- We will collaborate with school leadership to develop a process for determining if a substitute or other temporary employee is necessary.
- We will inform substitutes and other temporary employees that they must follow the leave and return to work protocols described herein and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) regulations.
- We will verify employment eligibility of current substitutes and recruit and hire additional substitutes to allow for a more robust pool of available substitutes.

Healthy Students

Statement of Purpose

Establish guidelines, supports, and scheduling options for returning to school that prioritize the physical and mental health of students and align with public health guidelines.

Areas of Focus

- Physical health and safety
- Mental health and well-being
- Scheduling options
- Athletics, field trips, and extracurricular activities

Guiding Questions

1. What safeguards should be in place to help students be safe and physically healthy?
2. How will we identify mental health needs and provide beneficial support to students?
3. How will we develop flexible and equitable daily schedules and groupings to support varied learning environments?
4. How will we structure athletics, field trips, and extracurricular programming to safeguard the health and welfare of students?

Key Strategies

PHYSICAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

We will implement processes and measures to help keep students physically safe and healthy.

- We will rely on families as partners in helping us keep students safe by determining and clearly communicating our expectations of families, including the expectation that no family will knowingly send a child to school who is ill or has been exposed to COVID-19 illness.
- We will educate families on the common symptoms of COVID-19 and what to do if they think their child or a family member might be sick.
- We will survey families in advance of reopening schools to determine the current health of students and relevant needs of families (e.g., transportation, PPE, child care).
- We will implement an entrance protocol for students that includes an age-appropriate self-evaluation and/or a family evaluation tool in order to identify students who are experiencing symptoms consistent with COVID-19.
- We will develop safety protocols in alignment with public health guidelines to follow during communal times (e.g., arrival and dismissal, class changes, lunch, assemblies, field trips, emergency drills) and in communal areas (e.g., classrooms, bathrooms, cafeterias, libraries, playgrounds, school buses).
- We will develop protocols that follow public health guidance regarding students wearing face masks.

- We will repurpose non-traditional learning spaces (e.g., auditoriums, cafeterias, outdoor spaces) and spaces traditionally reserved for "specials" (e.g., art, physical education, library, music), as needed and wherever feasible, to serve the learning needs of students in an environment that enables appropriate social distancing.
- We will minimize or eliminate movement between classes at the elementary level whenever feasible, requiring teachers rather than students to move from classroom to classroom to provide instruction.
- We will develop a pick-up procedure for healthy students who need to leave school early for an appointment or other reason unrelated to COVID-19 that safeguards the health and safety of staff and other students.
- We will develop a pick-up procedure for students who become ill during the school day that safeguards the health and safety of staff and other students.

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

We will collaborate with our network of school counselors to develop protocols and procedures to support the mental health and well-being of students.

- We will be mindful of the potential impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and public health restrictions on the mental health of our students and their families.
- We will provide a continuum of school mental health services and supports that address social, emotional and behavioral health and coping mechanisms.
- We will educate instructional staff and parents/guardians on the various ways that anxiety tends to manifest in children, and we will monitor students for those signs.
- We will survey school families as a mechanism for assessing overall needs as well as the social and emotional learning (SEL) needs of students to determine how they are coping with the current COVID-19 crisis.
- We will leverage proven ACPS programs and structures to promote SEL (e.g., Check and Connect, Developmental Designs, Freshman Seminar, Responsive Classroom).
- We will collaborate with administrators and teacher leaders to not only continue, but also strengthen our Check and Connect program as an important tool in providing mental health support for all students.
- We will schedule regular check-in sessions between school counselors and teacher teams, support staff, and departments, as needed, to collaborate on our response to the mental health needs of students.
- We will bolster efforts to support the mental health and well-being of students through collaboration with personnel supports across the school division, such as administrative teams; the International and ESOL (English as a Second or Other Language) team; the Social Emotional Academic Development (SEAD) team; Diversity Resource Teachers (DRTs); division-level family support staff; Special Education case managers; and athletic coaches and advisors.

We will identify and share beneficial community resources to further support the mental health and well-being of our students.

- We will establish a school-based community outreach team, including an administrator, school counselor, school psychologist, SEAD team member, and teachers, to collaborate with mental health specialists and service providers in our community, such as Region Ten, the Department of Social Services, and Elk Hill.
- We will communicate with families about available internal and external mental health services and supports.
- We will develop a division-level web presence devoted to mental health that includes resources specifically related to mental health and COVID-19; a video tool to promote recognition of signs of mental stress in children; and information about both family and community mental health resources.

SCHEDULING OPTIONS

We will develop flexible and equitable scheduling options that support multiple learning environments.

- In alignment with direction we receive from the state department of education and public health officials, we will develop initial scheduling options that aim to serve 100% of our learners at least four days per week through face-to-face instruction, virtual instruction, or a combination of the two.
- We will develop scheduling options that consider research from EAB, a best practice business serving the education industry.
- We will consider flexible scheduling options that enable the greatest degree of student success in a hybrid learning environment.
- We will evaluate our flexible daily schedules and groupings for equitable outcomes.
- We will develop a plan that offers a virtual learning option for students who may not yet feel comfortable returning to school.
- We will prioritize in-person learning for our youngest learners, English Learners, and students with disabilities.
- We will ensure planning efforts prioritize equity.
- We will make every effort to place children in the same family on the same daily schedule.
- We will collaborate with Transportation Services to ensure we can meet the transportation needs of every plan we propose.
- We will devise plans that accommodate appropriate physical space for social distancing.

ATHLETICS, FIELD TRIPS, AND EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

We will prioritize student health and welfare as well as equity in our planning for athletics, field trips, and extracurricular activities.

- We will make decisions about reopening high school athletics and activities in alignment with guidelines and recommendations provided by the Virginia High School League (VHSL), the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS), and public health officials, in coordination with directives from the state board of education.
- We will make decisions on school-sponsored extracurricular activities, field trips, and travel opportunities for all grade levels in conjunction with public health guidelines and the scheduling options that are determined in each phase of reopening.
- We will continue collaborating with ACAC Fitness and Wellness Centers to ensure that our athletic trainers are following the return-to-sport guidance from the National Athletic Trainers' Association (NATA).

Healthy Learning

Statement of Purpose

Prepare for and support high-quality teaching and learning in a variety of environments and, using the division's Framework for Quality Learning as our guide, prioritize equitable access, relationships, student choice, and active learning in instructional design.

Areas of Focus

- Learning communities
- Instructional design
- Mastery learning
- Learning environment
- Learning for all

Guiding Questions

1. How will we build a safe and supportive learning community for both in-person and virtual settings?
2. How will we design meaningful instruction for all?
3. How will teachers, students and families know where students are in their learning?
4. How will we support equitable outcomes in both face-to-face and remote learning environments?
5. How will we work together to advance student learning?

Key Strategies

LEARNING COMMUNITIES

We will focus on building relationships between and among teachers and students.

- We will be intentional in our ongoing efforts to reach out and to know our students and create learning partnerships through all forms of learning platforms.
- We will complement academic instruction with social-emotional learning.

We will intentionally build community.

- We will use proven ACPS programs (e.g., Culturally Responsive Teaching, Developmental Designs, Freshman Seminar, Responsive Classroom) to build community.
- We will ensure that students work together in a variety of configurations and for a variety of purposes across all platforms.
- We will design opportunities for all students to contribute and to share their learning processes and products.
- We will ensure learners are able to collaborate with each other.

INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN

We will design for how students learn.

- We will leverage the motivational power of student interest.
- We will meet students where they are in their individual learning and customize instruction accordingly.
- We will design for learner preferences based on students' skills, strengths, interests, aspirations and passions.

We will design powerful learning experiences.

- We will create opportunities for students to make or do something in order to arrive at or explore an enduring understanding.
- We will design learning experiences such that students will access the central concepts and essential skills of a discipline and use key knowledge and skills to achieve deeper understanding.

MASTERY LEARNING

We will clearly define learning goals.

- We will ensure that learning goals are clear to the student.
- We will communicate with students regularly about their progress relative to the goals.

We will use assessments to advance student learning by determining any learning gaps.

- We will use pre-assessments and formative assessments before and during the learning process to determine what students know, understand, and are able to do.
- We will give students specific, timely and actionable feedback to guide improvement.

We will provide students multiple options for demonstrating their knowledge and understanding.

- We will offer choice in how students can demonstrate their learning.
- We will help students understand what mastery looks like, including the evidence and characteristics that demonstrate mastery.

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

We will create routines, procedures and structures that support equitable outcomes in both face-to-face and remote learning environments.

- We will clearly identify learning targets.
- We will establish procedures that are clear and consistent, yet adaptable.
- We will use learning management systems to assist in designing learning experiences with students in mind.
- We will establish flexible learning spaces, both physical and digital, that allow students to work in a variety of ways that support rich learning experiences.
- We will create guidelines around asynchronous and synchronous learning that consider the access and needs of students.
- We will intentionally plan with student access in mind.
- We will provide multiple means of accessing and processing resources and demonstrating learning.
- We will ensure that all resources (printed and digital) and learning activities are equally engaging and rigorous.

LEARNING FOR ALL

We will embrace a collaborative culture and a focus on results.

- We will collaborate within schools and across the division through Professional Learning Communities to analyze and enhance classroom practice, improve student achievement, and ensure the success of every student.
- We will rely on high-quality resources, tools and materials and proven ACPS programs and methodologies to improve and promote effective teaching.
- We will cultivate practices that promote and value regular feedback from students and families.

Glossary of Terms

Education-Related Terms

ASYNCHRONOUS LEARNING
Digital and online learning in which the student learns from instruction that is not occurring in person or in real time, such as a prerecorded lesson or a game-based learning exercise.

CHECK AND CONNECT
Program that supports students by maintaining and strengthening relationships between educators, students and families. Both in person and by phone, a teacher checks on student progress and connects with the student through personalized communication, timely intervention, problem-solving, and goal setting.

CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE TEACHING
Program that consists of strategies and practices that more closely connect curricula with student backgrounds and experiences.

DEVELOPMENTAL DESIGNS
Comprehensive practices that integrate social and academic learning, based on the understanding that student success relies on a blend of good relationships, social skills, and engagement with learning. The approach aims to increase academic engagement by meeting adolescents' needs to feel connected, heard, empowered and safe.

ENDURING UNDERSTANDING
Statement that summarizes important ideas and core processes (i.e., what a student should understand, not just know or be able to do) that are central to a particular content area and have lasting value beyond the classroom.

FRAMEWORK FOR QUALITY LEARNING
Defines the shared philosophical foundations of our work in ACPS. The Framework for Quality Learning (FQL) serves as an interactive blueprint for professional staff to use in designing, creating, planning, implementing and analyzing quality learning experiences for all learners. It provides guidance on best practices in curriculum, assessment and instruction.

FORMATIVE ASSESSMENTS
Wide variety of methods that teachers use to conduct in-process evaluations of student comprehension, learning needs, and academic progress during a lesson, unit or course.

FRESHMAN SEMINAR
Supports incoming freshmen in their transition to high school by fostering a sense of community and empathy; helping students find voice and agency in their learning; and developing and maintaining positive relationships. Over the course of their freshman year, students come to understand the interdependent relationship among social, emotional and academic learning.

HYBRID LEARNING
Approach to course delivery that combines face-to-face classroom instruction with online activities.

MASTERY LEARNING
Educational approach in which instruction and assessment are designed to give students multiple opportunities to show evidence of progress toward and achievement of clearly defined learning objectives and criteria.

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITIES

Teams of teachers who teach the same grade level or course and work together to analyze and improve teaching and learning. Typically, Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) focus their work on three core questions: What do we want each student to learn; how will we know when each student has learned it; and how will we respond when a student experiences difficulty in learning?

RESPONSIVE CLASSROOM

Student-centered social and emotional learning approach to teaching and discipline that consists of research- and evidence-based practices designed to create safe, joyful and engaging classrooms and school communities for students and teachers.

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING (SEL)

Process through which social and emotional skills, including self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making, are modeled, learned and practiced.

SYNCHRONOUS LEARNING

Online, interactive learning that occurs at the same time, but not in the same place, such as a video conference or a livestreamed lesson.

Health-Related Terms

CONTACT TRACING

Process involving the identification of persons who may have come into contact with an infected person and subsequent collection of further information about these contacts in an effort to stop chains of transmission.

ISOLATION ROOM

In the context of school clinics, an isolation room is a designated safe space, visible by the school nurse or designee, used to separate students or staff who exhibit COVID-19 symptoms (e.g., fever, cough, shortness of breath).

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

Refers to protective clothing, helmets, gloves, face shields, goggles, facemasks and/or respirators or other equipment designed to protect the wearer from injury or the spread of infection or illness. PPE varies situationally. In the context of COVID-19, which spreads primarily between people through close contact and droplets, PPE needs vary by user and may include gloves, medical masks, respirators, eye protection, gowns, aprons, and boots or closed-toe work shoes.

PUBLIC HEALTH GUIDANCE/GUIDELINES/OFFICIALS

Refers to guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) at the federal level; the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) at the state level; and/or the Thomas Jefferson Health District (TJHD) at the local level.

SOCIAL DISTANCING

The practice of keeping at least 6 feet of physical space between yourself and others who are not in your household. In the context of COVID-19, the purpose of social distancing, also called "physical distancing," is to minimize contact with the respiratory droplets of an infected person. While a distance of 6 feet or more is recommended at gathering spots where activity levels are low, health officials recommend at least 10 feet of distance at locations where active sports are taking place.

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