



## **Duncanville ISD Initial Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief III Plan**

Duncanville has developed a plan in response to the Covid-19 pandemic and the student learning loss associated with the pandemic. This plan is a fluid document and will be updated as student needs change. The plan is broken down into specific areas addressed and they those areas appear in alphabetical order in this document.

### **Assessment of Students**

The Duncanville Independent School District will utilize NWEA MAP Growth Assessments and MAP Reading Fluency Assessments. The NWEA MAP Growth assessment adapts to each student's learning level to create a personalized assessment experience that accurately measures each student's performance and growth. Timely reports deliver the essential information that can be used to improve both teaching and learning.

The NWEA MAP Reading Fluency Assessment monitors oral reading fluency, literal comprehension, and foundational reading skills from season to season and year to year (assess students in-person or remotely). The district will be able to quickly screen students at risk of reading difficulty, including characteristics of dyslexia. Administering high-quality assessments and utilizing the data to drive instruction will assist the district in bridging the gap that widened due to learning loss during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

The Duncanville Independent School District will address the whole child, ensuring that students are not only on grade level in the area of academics but also on level in the area of social and emotional development as well. The district will utilize research-backed Social Emotional Learning assessments through Panorama to survey and support each student's soft skills like growth mindset, self-efficacy, social awareness, and self-management. Teachers and staff play a significant role in helping students develop strong social and emotional skills and the utilization of the Social Emotional Learning measures through Panorama will help staff assess each student's situation and plan accordingly.

The data received through Panorama will be analyzed alongside academic data during professional learning community (PLC) meetings to deepen the understanding of a student's behaviors or emotions that may be impeding their learning. The Panorama toolkit will provide Counselors and Teachers with the interventions needed to effectively respond to the data and make a plan of action for counseling guidance lessons, groups, and individual sessions.

The district will also utilize Panorama's Social and Emotional Learning assessments to better understand develop adult well-being and capacity to support every student's social and emotional development. School climate impacts student academics; therefore, by developing social and emotional competencies in students and staff, the district will foster more equitable and supportive environments for students learning. The impact of the pandemic on staff has been significant, therefore it is imperative that we continue to measure and meet the social and emotional needs of our staff as well as our students. Meeting the comprehensive needs of all



students and staff will allow us to further bridge the gap that widened during the COVID-19 pandemic. These assessments are evidence-based and comprehensive in nature which will ensure accurate measures of students and staff social and emotional needs.

## **HVAC Air Quality**

In order to create a healthier atmosphere for all employees and students Duncanville ISD will replace the oldest heating and air conditioning units with energy efficient units that greatly improve the indoor quality by better filtration of incoming air. This will help in daily operations and will also be extremely valuable if we encounter another pandemic.

## **Instructional Support**

After assessments are completed, the district will closely analyze the results and determine which students and campuses are in the greatest need of support. The district will employ a minimum of 50 tutors selected from retired certified teachers or certified teachers who are currently not employed by the district.

Professional development will be provided for these tutors in order to acquaint them with the current situation and to prepare them to be a support to the regular classroom teacher. Emphasis will be on best practices for supporting learning and principles of accelerating instruction for all students. The professional development will also include a thorough understanding of the NWEA MAP Growth and Reading Fluency assessment data and how to best utilize each student's information for personalized learning.

These tutors will join the regular classroom teacher, and in some instances, consultant with special education teachers and dyslexia teachers, in an effort to close the learning gaps by individualizing instruction and by reducing the student/teacher ratio in classrooms. While the regular classroom teacher will be delivering initial instruction the tutors will be able to break down the student numbers into easily managed groups to better assess learning of the individual students and to develop individual learning plans. The tutors will also be able to formatively assess students and discuss progress with the classroom teacher on a daily basis for on-going analysis of growth between the NWEA MAP Growth and Reading Fluency assessments.

Professional learning communities will be established including the tutors, the regular classroom teachers, instructional specialists and the building principal to become a think-tank for improving student achievement. These groups will meet periodically to discuss progress following a district-developed data dialogue framework to adjust teaching strategies, misconceptions, and operational adjustments necessary to best fit the needs of the students.



# DUNCANVILLE ISD

*Writing success stories, one student at a time.*

Contracted services will be purchased through K-5 software (Edgenuity MyPath) to integrate with math and ELAR supports to provide acceleration for students who have experienced learning loss as indicated by their academic profiles and assessment scores. Staff will be provided professional development on how to best utilize this resource to ensure a personalized experience for each student based on their individual learning needs. Edgenuity My Path is also an integrated resource with NWEA's MAP Growth making it a research-based companion that will enrich the value of the MAP assessments.

Subscription will be purchased for on-line literacy intervention tool (Reading A-Z) to increase phonemic awareness, vocabulary acquisition, and reading comprehension for general education and special education students. Reading A-Z also provides printable books that students can take home to further support their learning. As a district with a majority economically disadvantaged population, few students have access to leveled books at home. This resource will extend their learning and allow them to read independently at home resulting in a more expedited closure of learning gaps.

To address the special needs of students qualifying for special education services, Evidence-Based Strategies to lower class size and student/teacher ratios will be used to address behavior and academic needs. Contracted teachers will be assigned to classrooms for extra differentiation and academic support for instruction and assistance with student's behavior needs as they transition back to in-person learning.

The district will expand its utilization of the Second Step Social and Emotional Learning Curriculum to the elementary level (K-5) to build a better foundation in the competencies needed for social, emotional, and academic success. Socially and emotionally competent students have more positive attitudes toward themselves and others, show more positive social behaviors in school and have fewer discipline problems. This results in greater school connectedness which helps keep students safe and out of trouble and ultimately improves student academic performance. The curriculum teaches skills for resolving conflicts, working with others, forming healthy relationships, and making good decisions—so students can be more successful emotionally, socially, and academically. Before the COVID-19 Pandemic, students came to school affected by their home life, often including adverse childhood experiences (trauma) that affected their behavioral health and readiness to learn. The pandemic has created an exponential increase in students dealing with trauma. Therefore, the district has placed a huge emphasis on trauma-informed instruction. When schools implement universal social and emotional learning programs, students' competencies can support them and improve their ability to benefit from instruction beyond their circumstances. Meeting the comprehensive needs of all students will bridge the learning gap that widened due to the COVID-19 Pandemic



## **Parental Support**

Funds will be allocated for supporting learning in the home to prevent further learning loss by including parents as partners to understand strategies to increase academic literacy gains in the home. Instructional best practice training for parents to address learning loss and to increase reading and writing fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension will be initiated. The district will provide literacy and language supplies for learning experiences for students at home to continue reading fluency, comprehension, and vocabulary. Home/school partnerships are critical for ensuring learning extends beyond the school day therefore, we will ensure parents have the strategies for supporting their child's academic needs at home to support growth.

## **Professional Development**

Pedagogy training for instructional delivery, increasing vocabulary acquisition, reading, writing, and mathematics development, differentiation strategies, autism training, dual language training, and sheltered instruction training followed by a coaching observation and feedback will be implemented. Quality instruction is pivotal for accelerating student learning.

Professional development will span across special populations as well as with the foundational, general education teachers. Strategies will include training on content standards, assessment standards, grade-level student expectations, pre-requisite content standards, vertical alignment, engagement strategies, and training of differentiation for unique student learning needs. Extra-duty pay for teachers to complete the training series will be provided and consultants with expertise in these specific areas will provide professional development.

The district will address the comprehensive needs of students through utilizing research-based restorative practices. Meaningful human connections are the foundation of meaningful learning. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the district experienced a loss of connection with many students. When students are not connected, they are not able to learn. Teachers will receive two days of in-person professional development on restorative practices and restorative justice with a one-day follow-up. The professional development will cover leadership, guidance, and resources to implement and utilize restorative and relational practices in the classroom. Teachers will learn to facilitate 60 Second Relate Breaks in the classroom, develop student-generated questions weekly to be used in the 2 Minute Connections, create Sparks in the classroom, create and incorporate Pulse Meters in the classroom, understand the use of and facilitate the creation of the Treatment Agreement, create and facilitate Green "Get To Know You" (GTKY) Circles, and understand the need for restorative/relational practices in the classroom. Teachers will receive a stipend for attending and completing the training. This training will provide teachers with the skills to connect with students so that they can reach them. Meeting the comprehensive needs of all students will further bridge the learning gap that widened due to the COVID-19 Pandemic.



To further expand the depth of understanding of restorative practices, the district will provide all teachers with a copy of the Better than Carrots and Sticks book. This book will be used on all campuses as a teacher book study. In this book study, teachers will learn some of the important tenets of having a restorative and trauma-informed classroom. Some of those include Relationships, Meaningful Instruction, Classroom Procedures, and Peace Building. Also included is a plan for strategic implementation. A restorative classroom environment is critical when addressing the learning slide because, as previously stated, students can't learn until their social and emotional needs are addressed.

### **Retaining Staff**

Duncanville ISD recognizes how important it is to have continuity in staffing in order to better equip students. To help ensure this continuity Duncanville ISD will provide a \$2,500 retainage stipend to all employees that meet the qualifications established by the Board of Trustees. In addition to this stipend, many specialty area stipends were raised along with implementing or increasing signing bonuses for hard to fill positions within the district.

### **Staffing**

To address the students diagnosed with dyslexia, the district will add an additional dyslexia teacher and a dyslexia specialist to supplement existing staff to support the addition of bilingual dyslexia, growth in dyslexia needs, and to support remediation due to learning loss and missed dyslexia services of some 2020-2021 virtual students.

### **Student Services**

The district will implement calming corners in all K-6 classrooms. Calming corners allow students to learn to self-regulate during times of anxiety, frustration, anger, etc. Self-regulation is a critical skill all students need in order to stay engaged in learning. Calming corners serve as an "in classroom" tool for students to be able to regulate their emotional state while staying in the learning environment. The corners will be equipped with soft seating, calming activities like puzzles and bubbles, fidget toys, and calming visuals/displays. Calming corners allow students to gain self-awareness, self-management, and relationship skills. When children are able to practice identifying feelings and emotions, they are better able to manage stress, self-regulate and control their impulses. Calming corners give them a safe and comfortable space to let down their guard to process feelings. They are also able to practice mindfulness and think about how to best communicate their feelings. Stronger communication skills help them form stronger relationships with others and develop skills in empathy. They are also able to calm down without leaving the learning environment thus further hindering their academic growth.



Research is beginning to emerge regarding the toll that COVID-19 has had on the mental health of our students. According to the CDC, more and more students are experiencing mental health crisis that are requiring emergency room visits. Additionally, counselors are seeing many students in the district who are experiencing mental health challenges related to COVID-19. Many of those students are also experiencing academic and attendance concerns. When students are not stable, they are not able to learn. Therefore, it is necessary that we equip school counselors with the tools to address the trauma of students due to the pandemic that is negatively impacting their learning. NOVA Crisis Response Training consist of twenty-four hours of techniques and protocols for providing crisis intervention to traumatized individuals. By training the counselors, they will learn the fundamentals of crisis and trauma, and how to adapt to basic techniques to individuals and groups also known as psychological first aid. This training would provide counselors will high quality tools to support students in crisis specially targeting the impact of the pandemic. The sooner students can be stabilized, the sooner teachers will able to address their learning loss through classroom instruction.

The district will stock the Panther Pantry, which provides basic resources including, but not limited to food, clothing, and school supplies. On Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, physical needs are at the top. In order to learn, physical needs have to be met first and foremost. COVID-19 has put great strain financially on many families that were already economically disadvantaged. As a result, some students have not been able to access their education due to a lack of basic resources like food and clothing. This lack of resources greatly impacts their ability to stay engaged in learning due to factors such as hunger, personal hygiene, lack of school supplies, and necessary clothing. As the new school year begins, the district anticipates many students lacking these basic fundamental needs, which will affect their attendance, engagement, and concentration necessary for learning. Meeting the comprehensive needs of all students will bridge the learning gap that widened due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

## **Supplies**

Supplemental classroom kits and intervention tools will be purchased to address learning loss through classroom materials as well as through differentiated software supports that provide learner-specific instructional plans and targeted interventions. With the learning loss of students, it is imperative that the teachers know specifically where students have deficits so that they can be more timely and prescriptive in their instruction.

In addition to the digital resource of Reading A-Z, many classroom libraries need increased numbers of resources to improve learning loss through literacy, literature, and access to high quality books for students in grades K-8. Students need increased numbers of books for access at school and home to continue their growth in reading comprehension, both in English and in their native language. Reading materials and books will increase access for students to engage in rich, culturally relevant stories in native language print as well as English titles.



## **Technology**

District infrastructure will be upgraded in order to move toward one-to-one technology for all students. Devices will be purchased that will enable the district to approach the one-to-one ratio so students will be able to take their technology home and use at school without having to schedule utilization or share devices. With the move to online assessments for both local and state assessments, the online subscriptions to the various instructional platforms, and the lingering possibility of quarantining due to COVID-19 exposure or transmission, there is a substantial need to ensure all students have access to the learning resources they need in order to avoid any further learning loss.

To increase learning opportunities and improve learning loss as related to college and career readiness standards, technology and equipment for specialized certification areas will be upgraded to industry standards. These upgrades will also provide access to on-line college entrance exams tutoring platforms, and other career exploration sites.

Computers for Career and Technology Education will be upgraded in CTE labs and in graphic design classes (Mac labs). Other technology needs for upgraded laptops that load CADD programs and other specific learning programs by certification area will be addressed. In order for CTE students to have equitable access to quality learning experiences, they must have the technical resources that provide them with relevant and current exposure opportunities.