MARYLAND **TOGETHER**

MARYLAND'S RECOVERY PLAN FOR EDUCATION

COVID-19 RESPONSE AND THE PATH FORWARD

MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

EQUITY AND EXCELLENCE

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Better Together - Maryland's Recovery

Following my announcement that schools would remain closed and not reopen before May 15, 2020, immediate planning and discussion began surrounding the eventual reopening of schools. On May 6, 2020, I further announced that schools would be closed through the remainder of the 2019-2020 school year. Throughout the initial weeks of the COVID-19 crisis, districts and schools across the state began operating with various remote learning models for their students, with significant variation from one district to the next.

Now is the time to plan for and address the eventual reopening of schools, with an understanding that the health, safety, and wellness of students, families, educators, and staff must be a priority. National research currently indicates that many states are in the process of developing plans for the reopening of schools in the 2020-2021 school year. As reported by Education Week, May 15, 2020, "48 states, 4 U.S. territories, the District of Columbia, and the Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) have ordered or recommended school building closures for the rest of the academic year, affecting approximately 50.8 million public school students."

I believe that Maryland has the leadership capability and is uniquely positioned to lead that initiative. True leaders act during chaotic times. Therefore, we have developed guiding principles that can be used by educational leaders as they plan for the reopening of schools that provide educational environments that are conducive to learning, while maintaining the safety and security for students, faculty, and staff. Maryland is well-equipped to lead the nation in this all important endeavor.

The Maryland Together: Recovery Plan for Education contains a wealth of information that can be used as a point of reference by school leaders, students, and school communities. Through the collective endeavors of educational leaders and stakeholders throughout the state, the future educational needs of students will be fully addressed. The most important step will be for leadership to base important decisions on data, the uniqueness of individual school systems, financial capabilities, technological capabilities, and student needs. Prior planning will set the stage for accomplishments that will be achieved throughout the school year.

Remote learning cannot replace students' experiences with their teachers, administrators, and support staff. All of the students and educators with whom I have spoken have greatly missed the daily interactions that can only be experienced in classrooms and schools. We must all unite in our efforts to maintain equitable learning opportunities and safely return students to their schools.

During this period of the COVID-19 pandemic, the time for equity considerations is even more paramount in ensuring that the needs of all students are considered. Access to learning materials and learning opportunities, technology, nutrition, and additional supports are needed on an equitable basis. Communication with parents and wraparound services must also be prioritized.

Please note that not all guidance in the Recovery Plan constitutes a requirement for any district or school. I encourage districts and schools to review the Plan and use it as a baseline or starting point that can be modified in collaboration with a diverse group of stakeholders including parents, teachers, students, educators, and community members to fit each system's unique student population and needs. Requirements for the Reopening of Schools in Stage 2 have been added to the plan to specify what each local school system must have in place for the reopening. We will continuously provide updates to the Recovery Plan and provide additional resources as they become available . Although the plan contains extensive information on recovery, the plan does not contain all that is happening in the State and the local school systems to prepare for the reopening of schools.

The Maryland State Department of Education will continue to issue guidance and support to districts and schools throughout planning and implementation of processes that will be needed once schools are reopened. I understand that superintendents, principals, educators, staff, and families are working hard to support students during these difficult times. As educational leaders we must remain steadfast in our determination to respond to evolving conditions with noteworthy empathy, flexibility, and creativity. **Thank you for your tireless work on behalf of our students.**

Best Regards,

Karen B. Salmon, Ph. D. | STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

Where We Are, Who We Are

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and state of emergency declared by Governor Larry Hogan, Maryland schools have been closed since March 16, 2020, and will be closed through the end of the 2019-2020 school year. There is an understanding that education as we know it today will be changed tremendously in numerous unprecedented ways. It is incumbent upon educational leaders to begin taking concrete steps to **restore, reconstruct, and re-design education** as we know it today. The COVID-19 pandemic has in many ways changed our educational, economic, societal, and everyday way of life. As a result, we are now faced with an extraordinary challenge that will require the deployment of our individual and collective expertise to **address the needs of students, families, staff, faculty, and school communities**. Now is the time for each and every one of us to show conviction and courage in the decisions that are made, based upon historic changes not only in the state of Maryland, but also worldwide.

Since the closure of schools, the State Superintendent of Schools has been meeting multiple times each week with local School Superintendents to address issues related to COVID-19. Issues range from identifying concerns, to sharing best practices, as well as making recommendations. Other groups have also been meeting regularly including Assistant Superintendents for Instruction, Directors of Special Education, Directors of Career and Technical Education, Directors of Student Services, Coordinators of School Counseling, Federal Program Liaisons, Chief Financial Officers, and many other groups. In addition, five committees with state-wide representation were established and met to address and make recommendations on seniors/high school requirements, attendance for students and teachers, grading and reporting, English Learners, and Continuity of Learning (Standards). The Co-Chairs charged with the development of Maryland Together: Recovery Plan for Education are meeting with the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) External Stakeholder Committee/Recovery Plan Committee to gather input and recommendations on the reopening plan. The State Board has taken actions and approved waivers to support the graduation of seniors and other policies. Now is the time to move forward to plan for the opening of schools in an environment which is safe for students, educators, cafeteria workers, bus drivers, and all school personnel. The Maryland Together: Maryland's Recovery Plan for Education will address processes and procedures that should be considered immediately but also be utilized as a road map for future instances of school closures. In addition to the materials contained in the body of the Recovery Plan, the appendices contain resources with links to valuable information on considerations for reopening schools.

In addition, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has recently released updated information that may be helpful in planning for the reopening of schools and communication with the public. The publications are: **Coronavirus Disease 2019 Considerations for Schools**; **Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfecting: Public Spaces, Workplaces, Businesses, Schools, and Homes**; and **Coronavirus Disease 2019: Considerations for Youth Sports.** The Maryland Department of Health (MDH) and the local Departments of Health will provide updated guidance as the reopening gets closer.

The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) has been a committed partner to states in assisting with all phases of the closing and ultimately planning for the reopening of schools. The **COVID-19 Phase 2 Restart and Recovery** is an additional helpful document for local school systems (LSSs).

Challenges, Opportunities, and Key Dates

Following the Governor's declaration of a state of emergency in Maryland on March 5, 2020, the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) has taken significant actions to protect the health, safety, and wellbeing of school communities.

MARCH 12, 2020: Karen B. Salmon, Ph.D., State Superintendent of Schools announced the initial closure of schools from March 16-March 27, 2020, the cancellation of all travel for students and staff, and a cleaning process for all school buildings.

MARCH 16, 2020: The Office of School and Community Nutrition at MSDE, alongside food directors from local school systems, began serving meals to students at sites throughout the State as an expansion of the summer meal program.

MARCH 24, 2020: The Maryland State Board of Education voted to submit requests for waivers to the U.S. Department of Education (USDE), which were approved. These actions waived requirements to administer statewide assessments to all students, to make annual accountability determinations, to identify schools for support and improvement, and to provide data on Maryland's and local report cards for assessment and accountability information.

MARCH 26, 2020: Dr. Salmon announced the extension of school closures until April 24, and the indefinite closure of child care facilities not serving essential personnel.

MARCH 30, 2020: Registered child care providers and other partners began providing child care services only to the children of essential personnel in Maryland.

APRIL 14, 2020: The Maryland State Board of Education approved a number of waiver requests and additional flexibility on a number of issues. This included additional clinical internship options, authority to the State Superintendent to waive certain instructional days, and waivers for certain graduation, assessment, and service learning requirements.

APRIL 17, 2020: Dr. Salmon announced the extension of school closures until May 15, 2020.

APRIL 24, 2020: Dr. Salmon announced additional grant payments of $2,000 to child care providers serving the children of essential personnel.

APRIL 25, 2020: More than six million meals had been served at more than 600 sites across the State to school-aged children through the expanded summer meals program.

APRIL 28, 2020: The Maryland Public Secondary School Athletic Association (MPSSAA) announced the cancellation of the remainder of the 2019-2020 sports season and subsequent championships.

APRIL 28, 2020: The Maryland State Board of Education approved additional waivers for instructional days for nonpublic schools, certain requirements for teacher evaluations, and timelines for grade changes. The Board also gave permission to publish emergency regulations to establish initial certification to educator candidates during the state of emergency.

MAY 6, 2020: Dr. Salmon announced the extension of school closures through the end of the 2019-2020 school year.

Strategies for Moving Forward

This document presents a number of strategies and considerations for school systems as communities move forward together to embrace the new normal of conducting school operations during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. Reopening of, and re-entry into school buildings is dependent on the trends and key data points referenced in the Governor's "Maryland Strong: Roadmap to Recovery."

Not all options for school recovery operations fall into one of the phases identified in the Roadmap to Recovery. These guidelines are not designed to be prescriptive and seek to provide local jurisdictions with different ideas and options as they map out their own recovery plans.

The goal with each of the topics addressed is to assist in the articulation of a vision that can be easily communicated to members of the school community. *We all want students and educators to feel comfortable and safe returning to school environments.*

The best way to do that is to identify solutions that make transitions to and from online learning and a return to some form of in-person instruction, as seamless as possible. We have provided a checklist of items and considerations for school systems as they develop the recovery plan that works for their unique local circumstances. Please refer to Appendix A.

With the understanding that different systems require different solutions, we have identified a number of scheduling models and calendar considerations that can be used to fit the needs of each community. Modifying school schedules and calendars to account for lost instructional time and to ensure ongoing health and safety efforts, such as social distancing is of paramount importance.

Specific requirements for reopening schools have been identified and must be included in Local Recovery Plans to ensure a level of consistency throughout the State at the local school system level. Within each plan, there are certain requirements which each local school system must address. **Each Superintendent will be responsible for incorporating these specific requirements into the plan for their system.**

Strategies for Reopening Process

In Stage 2 of Governor Hogan's Roadmap for Recovery, schools and school programs will begin the reopening process. The decision on the reopening of schools is a decision of the State Superintendent in concert with the Governor, the State Board of Education, the MD Department of Health, and other MD agencies and personnel. Upon a decision, Dr. Karen Salmon, State Superintendent of Schools, will announce the reopening and will communicate directly with the Local School Superintendents and the public. In preparation of reopening, the Maryland Together: Maryland's Recovery Plan for Education will serve as a roadmap for the local school systems in developing Local Recovery Plans. Requirements are enumerated below. Each school system must include these requirements in their reopening plan. The requirements for opening schools during Stage 3 will be determined.

1. **LOCAL SCHOOL SYSTEMS MUST HAVE THEIR RECOVERY PLANS COMPLETED AND POSTED TO THEIR WEBSITES BY AUGUST 14, 2020. THE MSDE WILL REVIEW ALL LOCAL RECOVERY PLANS TO ENSURE THAT THE PLANS INCLUDE AND ADDRESS ALL REQUIREMENTS FOR OPENING SCHOOLS.**

2. **THE LOCAL SCHOOL SYSTEM'S EQUITY PLAN MUST BE REFLECTED THROUGHOUT THE LOCAL RECOVERY PLAN.**

    The **Equity and Excellence: The Guide to Educational Equity in Maryland** was developed with support from MSDE's Network for Equity and Excellence in Education, representatives from all 24 local school systems, to establish focus areas and strategies to improve the achievement of all students in the State. The Guide is to serve as a road map to educators on how to apply an equity lens to all aspects of their work and is a valuable resource as LSSs develop and implement their own educational equity policies. The Guide should be used as a practical tool for developing goals in each school system's Local Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Consolidated Strategic Plan. Those goals and strategies are intended to increase equitable opportunities for all of our students.

3. **LOCAL SCHOOL SYSTEMS MUST ESTABLISH A RECOVERY PLAN STAKEHOLDER GROUP THAT IS REPRESENTATIVE OF THEIR SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITY.**

    Local school systems must establish a reopening stakeholder group to assist in the development of the school system's reopening plan. The group must contain a diverse group of stakeholders including parents, teachers, students, educators, and community members to encompass each system's unique student population and needs.

4. **EARLY IN THE SCHOOL YEAR, SCHOOLS MUST DETERMINE WHERE THEIR STUDENTS ARE INSTRUCTIONALLY, IDENTIFY THE GAPS IN LEARNING, AND PREPARE A PATH FOR INSTRUCTIONAL SUCCESS AND RECOVERY.**

5. **ALL LOCAL SCHOOL SYSTEMS MUST ENSURE THAT MD COLLEGE AND CAREER READY STANDARDS PREK-12 ARE TAUGHT IN ALL CONTENT AREAS AND THE STATE FRAMEWORKS ARE FOLLOWED FOR EACH CONTENT.**

    The Maryland College and Career Ready Standards (MCCRS) are essential in ensuring that students have a strong command of the skills and understandings associated with the critical areas. These skills and understandings are critical to building the foundational knowledge needed for the success of students.

6. **LOCAL SCHOOL SYSTEMS MUST FOLLOW THE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT (IDEA), SECTION 504 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT (SECTION 504), AND TITLE II OF THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA)**

The United States Department of Education (DOE) has issued multiple guidance documents:

- **Non-Regulatory Guidance on Flexibility and Waivers for Grantees and Program Participants Impacted by Federally Declared Disasters**

- **Questions and Answers on Providing Services to Children with Disabilities during the Coronavirus Disease 2019 Outbreak (March 2020)**

- **Supplemental Fact Sheet Addressing the Risk of COVID-19 in Preschool, Elementary and Secondary Schools While Serving Children with Disabilities**

These federal guidance are clear that the national health crisis does not abridge the rights of students with disabilities to a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) and equal opportunity to educational services as their non-disabled peers

The MSDE Division of Early Intervention and Special Education Services (DEI/SES) has created multiple fact sheets to address common questions raised by local public agencies, parents, and the advocacy community during this unprecedented time. These documents are based on current federal guidance as of the date of publication of the documents. Please see Appendix E: Recovery Resources under the Division of Early Intervention and Special Education Services Technical Assistance Bulletins in this Recovery Plan. Local public agencies should also continue to consult with their legal counsel to ensure local continuity of learning plans and practices comply with applicable state and federal law.

7. LOCAL SCHOOL SYSTEMS MUST FOLLOW PROCEDURES THAT ARE DEVELOPED BY THE MSDE IN COLLABORATION WITH THE MD DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND GUIDANCE FROM THE CDC FOR AN INDIVIDUAL WHO TESTS POSITIVE FOR COVID-19.

As true for all students, the school health specialist is expected to implement the appropriate communication process when notified of individuals in the school setting with COVID-19 symptoms, a COVID-19 positive test, or possible exposure to a person or persons with COVID-19 within the last 14 days and will work together with local school system and local health department personnel to implement the contact tracing process as necessary.

Local school systems should follow guidance from the CDC and the MD Department of Health. The CDC describes the following:

PREPARING FOR WHEN SOMEONE GETS SICK

Schools must consider the following strategies if someone gets sick.

Advise Staff and Families of Sick Students of Home Isolation Criteria

- Sick staff members or students should not return until they have met CDC's **criteria to discontinue home isolation**.

Isolate and Transport Those Who are Sick

- Make sure that staff and families know that they (staff) or their children (families) should not come to school, and that they should notify school officials (e.g., the designated COVID-19 point of contact) if they (staff) or their child (families) become sick with COVID-19 **symptoms**, test positive for COVID-19, or have been **exposed** to someone with COVID-19 symptoms or a confirmed or suspected case.

- Immediately separate staff and **children** with COVID-19 **symptoms** (such as fever, cough, or shortness of breath) at school. Individuals who are sick should go home or to a healthcare facility depending on how severe their symptoms are, and follow **CDC guidance for caring for oneself and others** who are sick.

- Work with school administrators, nurses, and other healthcare providers to identify an isolation room or area to separate anyone who has COVID-19 symptoms or tests positive but does not have symptoms. School nurses and other healthcare providers should use **Standard and Transmission-Based Precautions** when caring for sick people. See: **What Healthcare Personnel Should Know About Caring for Patients with Confirmed or**

- Establish procedures for safely transporting anyone who is sick to their home or to a healthcare facility. If you are calling an ambulance or bringing someone to the hospital, try to call first to alert them that the person may have COVID-19.

Clean and Disinfect

- Close off areas used by a sick person and do not use these areas until after **cleaning and disinfecting**

- Wait at least 24 hours before cleaning and disinfecting. If 24 hours is not feasible, wait as long as possible. Ensure **safe and correct use** and storage of **cleaning and disinfection products**, including storing products securely away from children.

Notify Health Officials and Close Contacts

- In accordance with state and local laws and regulations, school administrators should notify **local health officials**, staff, and families immediately of any case of COVID-19 while maintaining confidentiality in accordance with the **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).**

- Inform those who have had **close contact** with a person diagnosed with COVID-19 to stay home and **self-monitor for symptoms**, and follow **CDC guidance** if symptoms develop.

8. LOCAL SCHOOL SYSTEMS MUST FOLLOW SAFETY PROTOCOLS FOR COLLECTION OF MATERIALS, CLEANING OF SCHOOLS AND OTHER FACILITIES, DAILY CLEANING, AND NUTRITION AS ESTABLISHED BY MSDE IN COLLABORATION WITH THE MD DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND THE CDC GUIDANCE

Upon opening school buildings, all procedures and guidelines provided by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the Maryland Department of Health should be followed. The CDC has published **Considerations for Schools** which includes a description of Maintaining Healthy Environments as described below.

MAINTAINING HEALTHY ENVIRONMENTS (INFORMATION FROM THE CDC)

Schools may consider implementing several strategies to maintain healthy environments.

Cleaning and Disinfection

- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces (e.g., playground equipment, door handles, sink handles, drinking fountains) within the school and on school buses at least daily or between use as much as possible. Use of shared objects (e.g., gym or physical education equipment, art supplies, toys, games) should be limited when possible, or cleaned between uses.

- If transport vehicles (e.g., buses) are used by the school, drivers should practice all safety actions and protocols as indicated for other staff (e.g., hand hygiene, cloth face coverings). To clean and disinfect school buses or other transport vehicles, see guidance for **bus transit operators.**

- Develop a schedule for increased, routine cleaning and disinfection.

- Ensure **safe and correct use** and storage of cleaning and disinfection products, including storing products securely away from children. Use products that meet **EPA disinfection criteria.**

- Cleaning products should not be used near children, and staff should ensure that there is adequate ventilation when using these products to prevent children or themselves from inhaling toxic fumes.

Shared Objects

- Discourage sharing of items that are difficult to clean or disinfect.

- Keep each child's belongings separated from others' and in individually labeled containers, cubbies, or areas.

- Ensure adequate supplies to minimize sharing of high touch materials to the extent possible (e.g., assigning each student their own art supplies, equipment) or limit use of supplies and equipment by one group of children at a time and clean and disinfect between use.

- Avoid sharing electronic devices, toys, books, and other games or learning aids.

Ventilation

- Ensure ventilation systems operate properly and increase circulation of outdoor air as much as possible, for example by opening windows and doors. Do not open windows and doors if doing so poses a safety or health risk (e.g., risk of falling, triggering asthma symptoms) to children using the facility.

Water Systems

- To minimize the risk of **Legionnaire's disease** and other diseases associated with water, **take steps** to ensure that all water systems and features (e.g., sink faucets, drinking fountains, and decorative fountains) are safe to use after a prolonged facility shutdown. Drinking fountains should be cleaned and sanitized, but encourage staff and students to bring their own water to minimize use and touching of water fountains.

Modified Layouts

- Space seating/desks at least 6 feet apart when feasible.

- Turn desks to face in the same direction (rather than facing each other), or have students sit on only one side of tables, spaced apart.

- Create distance between children on school buses (g., seat children one child per row, skip rows) when possible.

Physical Barriers and Guides

- Install physical barriers, such as sneeze guards and partitions, particularly in areas where it is difficult for individuals to remain at least 6 feet apart (e.g., reception desks).

- Provide physical guides, such as tape on floors or sidewalks and signs on walls, to ensure that staff and children remain at least 6 feet apart in lines and at other times (e.g. guides for creating "one way routes" in hallways).

Communal Spaces

- Close communal use shared spaces such as dining halls and playgrounds with shared playground equipment if possible; otherwise, stagger use and **clean and disinfect** between use.

- Add physical barriers, such as plastic flexible screens, between bathroom sinks especially when they cannot be at least 6 feet apart.

Food Service

- Have children bring their own meals as feasible, or serve individually plated meals in classrooms instead of in a communal dining hall or cafeteria, while ensuring the **safety of children with food allergies.**

    - Enforce strict handwashing with soap and water after food contact

    - Disinfect surfaces after food contact is made.

    - Ensure that there is a "do not share" food policy among students.

    - Before school resumes, teachers and school leaders review food allergy and 504 plans for all children with food allergies.

    - Teachers should refresh their understanding of food allergies, including symptoms of allergic reactions to food.

- Use disposable food service items (e.g., utensils, dishes). If disposable items are not feasible or desirable, ensure that all non-disposable food service items are handled with gloves and washed with dish soap and hot

water or in a dishwasher. Individuals should **wash their hands** after removing their gloves or after directly handling used food service items.

- If food is offered at any event, have pre-packaged boxes or bags for each attendee instead of a buffet or family-style meal. Avoid sharing food and utensils and ensure the **safety of children with food allergies.**

Food and Nutrition Operations During Phase 2 School Reopening

Assess current facilities to identify:

- Current capacity for volume of student meal service operations.

- Capacity factors such as the food supply chain, hot and/or cold holding equipment, dry food storage area, food preparation space, equipment for transportation of meals inside a school building (such as carts and racks), and equipment for transportation of food and meals between buildings (such as refrigerated trucks, hot and cold holding equipment, food storage bins, etc.).

- Logistics and operation needs to address simultaneous operations for on and off-site student meal delivery during school reopenings.

- Feasibility for food service model shift from traditional cafeteria line model to other potential models.

Assess current standard operating procedures to identify:

- Enhanced sanitation measures related to student meal service, including student handwashing, appropriate sanitation measures for touch-contact surfaces used by students during meal service in schools (such as point of service touch pads, tables and chairs, carts used in transportation, etc.).

- Food safety protocols and staff training, modified packaging, and sanitation.

- Determine health and safety measures for School Nutrition Staff, such as daily temperature check and a schedule for virus testing, protocols for isolation and containment for prevention of virus outbreak, access to and maintenance of PPE, etc.

- Offer options for staff at higher risk for severe illness (including older adults and people of all ages with certain underlying medical conditions) that limit their exposure risk (e.g., telework, modified job responsibilities that limit exposure risk).

- Plans in the event of positive cases of COVID-19 in the food and nutrition staff and/or increased volume of staff absenteeism.

Prior to reopening take steps to:

- Minimize the risk of diseases associated with water, by ensuring that all water systems and features (e.g., sink faucets, drinking fountains, decorative fountains) are safe to use after a prolonged facility shutdown. Drinking fountains should be cleaned and sanitized, but encourage staff and students to bring their own water to minimize use and touching of water fountains.

- Teach and reinforce use of cloth face coverings. Face coverings should be worn by staff and students as feasible, and are most essential in times when physical distancing is difficult. Individuals should be frequently reminded not to touch the face covering and to wash their hands frequently. Information should be provided to staff on proper use, removal and washing of cloth face coverings.

- Teach and reinforce handwashing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds and increase monitoring to ensure adherence among students and staff.

- Notify the local health department of reopening and follow any additional guidance and regulations provided.

Additional CDC information can be found at:

Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfecting: Public Spaces, Workplaces, Businesses, Schools, and Homes

The CCSSO has further developed a helpful document entitled the **Restart and Recovery: Addressing Building Safety,**

9. LOCAL SCHOOL SYSTEMS MUST FOLLOW PROTOCOLS FOR THE SAFE TRANSPORTATION OF STUDENTS TO AND FROM SCHOOLS.

This information is presented to allow school systems the ability to make decisions about student transportation during the COVID-19 pandemic. Every school system will have to determine what will work for their transportation department and student safety.

SEATING ON THE BUS

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have published guidance that recommends that on school buses, a child sits one to a seat and by alternating the rows in which students sit. For a 77-passenger bus, this would allow for approximately 13 students to be transported. It is understood that by adding social distancing requirement for all riders, the number able to be transported on a 77-passenger bus drops to 8 (not counting the driver).

Local school systems may not be able to meet the demands of adherence to CDC recommendations. However, each school system must put into practice, innovative ways to combat the spread of COVID-19.

Some examples can be:

- Encouraging use of face coverings when use of alternate rows for seating is not possible.
- Allowing siblings from the same household to sit together in the same seat.
- Recommending passengers sit in the same seat going to and returning from the trip.
- Allowing for alternate transportation arrangements, such as riding with a parent.

SCHOOL BUS SAFETY

All school buses must be inspected according to the Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA) COMAR Regulations relating to school vehicle standards, prior to transporting students.

Thorough school vehicle cleaning must become routine and areas of "high-touch" must be cleaned and disinfected according to a local schedule. Some examples of a routine cleaning schedule are:

- After the bus drops off students at home or school (every trip)
- At the completion of its morning or afternoon run
- Once a day

All school vehicle drivers must be trained in how to appropriately and effectively clean and disinfect the school vehicle.

Other steps to take to increase health and safety may include:

- Keeping windows open to allow for air circulation throughout the vehicle during trips
- Restricting any food or eating on the school bus
- Encouraging students to use hand sanitizer or wash their hands prior to boarding
- Loading and unloading students in a manner that encourages social distancing (load back to front and unload front to back)
- Keeping the seat behind the driver empty during every trip
- Taking the temperatures of school vehicle drivers and attendants before active duty. According to the CDC, any staff member that has a temperature of or over 100.4°F is considered to have a fever.

10. LOCAL SCHOOL SYSTEMS MUST DEVELOP A SYSTEM FOR TRACKING ATTENDANCE WHEN STUDENTS ARE ENGAGED IN DISTANCE LEARNING.

Local school systems must consider virtual platforms that allow for management and tracking of attendance. Most Local Management Systems offer a reporting feature that tracks time a student is logged into the system but not necessarily whether this is active work time or not. It is important to note that asynchronous online learning often requires more time to complete assignments.

11. EACH LOCAL SCHOOL SYSTEM MUST DEVELOP ITS OWN PLAN FOR COMMUNICATION.

School systems must establish regular channels of communication as the plan for reopening of schools is under development and as schools reopen. Areas of planning for communication include key messages which reflect the guiding principles of the school system's recovery plan. Determining the key messages provides a reference point for all communication updates. For example:

- All students, educators, and staff should feel comfortable and safe in their school environments.

- Student learning is paramount.

- Reflection on recent experiences with distance learning has informed the recovery planning.

- We are moving fast and we must stay flexible; we will explore, reflect, and acquire new knowledge to ensure continuous improvements are achieved.

Coordination

How will communications be coordinated? Usually, a school system has a communication officer, point person, or a small team, to direct public communications, and address inquiries from parents, media, and the general public. The roles of these individuals are even more important as school communities implement the work of reopening after closure and weeks of remote learning. The interdisciplinary planning of the school system for reopening will be better supported if communications are integrated from the outset.

12. THE COVID-19 CHECKLIST (APPENDIX A) MUST BE UTILIZED IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE RECOVERY PLAN.

13. THE MARYLAND PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION (MPSSAA) ROADMAP FORWARD FOR INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETICS AND ACTIVITIES MUST ALIGN WITH THE MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND THE LSS EDUCATIONAL AND HEALTH AND SAFETY DECISIONS IN ORDER FOR EDUCATION-BASED ATHLETICS AND ACTIVITIES TO RESUME DURING STAGE ONE AND STAGE TWO OF THE GOVERNOR'S MARYLAND STRONG: ROADMAP TO RECOVERY.

SEASONAL PLANNING AND PREPARATION

Planning in advance and establishing dates and timelines have been a hallmark of the MPSSAA and local interscholastic athletics programs. The entire MPSSAA community for generations has set their cyclical calendar to evolve around first practice dates, first play dates, and state championships. The MPSSAA recognizes that this calendar notion must be reimagined given the unknown in this instance and instituting best practices to avoid COVID-19 spread. LSS athletics programs and stakeholders must embrace the notion that the safe return of interscholastic athletics will need to be administered on an incremental basis, using the latest national, state, and local health recommendations and operational procedures.

As schools reopen and considerations are made to meet the needs of current health and safety standards, including social

distancing, face mask coverings, and size of gathering, the following are some options for instituting participation opportunities:

- Team-based and skill development practices with no competition for extended periods of time.

- Intra-school competitions utilizing multiple varsity teams or intramurals. Examples include limits on roster sizes and the creation of multiple teams.

- Competition confined to a set number of schools in the same geographic area. Multiple competitions against the same schools may take place within this scenario.

- Modifications of seasonal schedules.

- City/county/conference competition only.

- Modified culminating events, tournaments, or invitationals.

LSS COVID-19 RETURN TO PLAY CONSIDERATIONS

Since District Athletic Administrators in each LSS are the well-respected voices for safety issues involving interscholastic athletics and extracurricular activities, the MPSSAA strongly urges that these individuals engage with their local authorities and health departments to develop coordinated policies and procedures with positive approaches for the return of interscholastic athletics and extracurricular activities.

A LSS Return to Play Committee must consider the following as members: superintendent (or designee); school district athletic administrator(s); principal representative; system health coordinator/nurse; sports medicine/pediatric physician; transportation director; lead athletic trainer; athletic director (or representative); coach representatives; and local health department representative.

LSS COVID-19 Committees can create operational plans that provide guidance in the following categories: facilities cleaning; entrance/exit strategies; limitations on gatherings; pre-work out screenings; face coverings; hygiene practices; hydration and nutrition; locker rooms; training areas; physical activity and athletic equipment; and accommodations for certain students (i.e. showers for homeless students).

Local school systems must begin the preparation phase as soon as possible, assembling a Return to Play Committee to assess upcoming guidance from the MPSSAA and begin to implement policies and procedures related to health and safety measures and operational measures for the return of interscholastic athletics.

I.   Research

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the landscape of education more dramatically than any other phenomenon in the history of our state school system. An event of this magnitude will definitely impact how we provide education to students. The new normal of school operations may be measured in terms of before and after the pandemic. Today, daily school operations will likely include increased health and hygiene measures such as wearing masks, temperature checks, hand-washing, frequent sanitation, and social distancing, especially for elementary students.   In addition, elementary playground areas may be marked for social distancing along with areas within schools. Enhanced cleaning procedures and sanitation measures will likely be necessary on a more frequent basis

Reduced class sizes may be expected to become the norm, consisting of students placed in the smallest classes possible with desks that are placed six feet apart. Additional considerations will be given to holding classes outdoors, in the gymnasium, and other spaces when possible. Large school assemblies may not be possible and school dances and school functions reduced. Special areas such as art, health, and physical education may be offered remotely via video chat along with parent/teacher conferences, discipline conferences, 504, and IEP meetings. Considerations and adjustments in parental involvement in school activities may occur. Along with a reduction or elimination in the liberty of parents entering schools.

The response to changing situations will also require creative planning supported by research. Research supports a variety of approaches to reopen schools. These methods allow students to receive instruction in a way that safely "picks back up" where students left off, while maintaining appropriate guidelines for the health of students and staff.

RESTRUCTURING SCHOOL TIME

There are two general ways to reconstruct school time: Take the same number of minutes and days and reallocate them and add minutes or days. Generally, reallocation of time has **no impact** on student learning, for better or for worse. However, restructuring school time supports creative scheduling that safely bring back students if they need to be physically spread out.

Unfortunately, research on **time reallocation** suggests that no reallocation solution will make up for the spring/summer 2020 learning slowdown. Reallocation should therefore, be considered a baseline strategy for maintaining student learning while safely returning them to school.

Schools systems might elect to bring back a fraction of the students and redistribute the 180 days of the 2020-2021 school year. School systems might also "double-up" on in-person time with "A/B" days, as high schools do with block scheduling. (Research on **year round schooling** and **block scheduling**, which are approximations for these approaches, finds no impact for the average student in most subjects. For example, normally students might receive 60 minutes of both math and English Language Arts (ELA) in person, each day. Under a partial reopen, if students learned math in person every other day for 120 minutes, and ELA at home on the opposite days for 120 minutes, there would be no "slide" anticipated in math because students were only getting in-person instruction every other day.)

Only the **addition** of time (and/or instructional interventions, discussed below) might be expected to have a limited positive **impact**. International **research** has found that the positive effect of additional time on math and science achievement were largely due to longer school days, not longer school years, which may guide school system decision-making; if only half of the students may be present at one time. It may be more academically effective to have students in school for longer days on an alternating schedule, rather than every day on a half-day schedule.

SUBJECTS OF INSTRUCTION

Research on summer slide shows that a break or slowdown in instruction has a greater negative **impact** on **math** as compared to English Language Arts. This suggests that, if school systems cannot teach all subjects in person, it may be beneficial to prioritize the teaching of math in person (or at least synchronously via distance learning). For example, an **Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) simulation** shows less expected learning loss during a shutdown or slowdown in reading compared to math, which may be due to the fact that students can, and are more likely, to read independently at home than do math. Additionally, students are more

likely to receive help at home in reading than in math.

MODES OF INSTRUCTION

Research has **consistently** found fully online virtual schools to produce less effective outcomes than those for students who are in brick and mortar school settings.

According to limited research on synchronous distance learning (mostly conducted on college students), if instruction must be online students prefer synchronous learning both for greater **understanding**, comprehension, and for **social** and **collaborative** reasons (both between student and teacher and among students). Systems may therefore, consider avoiding fully online education and integrating synchronous learning and communication where possible when online learning occurs.

INSTRUCTIONAL INTERVENTIONS

The way instruction is delivered can have a larger effect than any particular curriculum or textbook. Specifically, on average, one-on-one tutoring and/or small group direct instruction **can be more effective** in raising student achievement than a specific curriculum, intervention, and/or set of instructional materials. Time when students are not in school may therefore, be better utilized in one-on-one or small-group synchronous sessions, rather than whole-class synchronous work and/or asynchronous learning. Further research suggests that paraprofessionals and instructional aides can deliver one-on-one and small group instruction as effectively as teachers, which may assist school systems in determining staffing decisions if resources and/or personnel are limited.

An additional strategy for the 2020-2021 school year might be looping (keeping students with the same teacher). **Looping** has small academic benefits for students at the end of the second year, with greater benefits for students of color. Since looping takes advantage of teachers' familiarity with students, it may be even more beneficial in the current situation because no state, and likely no local assessment data will be available to teachers. Looping can also have a positive impact on teacher effectiveness as familiarity with students may help new or less effective teachers improve.

AGE, ABILITY, AND SERVICE GROUP CONSIDERATIONS

Research, including an **NWEA simulation**, indicates that, at least in grades 3-8, students in earlier grades will experience more of a negative impact when learning stops or slows down than students in later grades, with the caveat that this fact is for the average student. Further **research** on distance learning suggests that younger students have more trouble processing content delivered via online learning, even if delivery is synchronous. Considering these two points together, school systems may want to consider ways to allocate more or most in-person time to younger students.

In general, **research** on extra time programs suggests that the lowest performing students should be provided with as much instruction as possible. Further, **research** on distance learning suggests that at-risk, low-performing students are the population most likely to be negatively impacted by online schooling, meaning these students should have in-person instruction prioritized for them.

MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING

Research shows the importance of mental and emotional well-being for students and staff, which has both psychological and ultimately academic outcomes. Access to **school counselors** and **school-based health clinics** helps students. Counselors and school based health centers will play an extremely important role in the adjustment period when buildings reopen.

II. Educational Equity

With the adoption of COMAR 13A.01.06 Educational Equity on October 19, 2019, the Maryland State Board of Education established educational equity as a matter of policy and priority in Maryland's public schools. The regulations require the following:

- Each Maryland public school will provide every student equitable access to the educational rigor, resources, and support that are designed to maximize the student's academic success and social/emotional well-being;

- Each local school system's procedures and practices provide for educational equity and ensure that there are no obstacles to accessing educational opportunities for any student; and

- Achievement will improve for all Maryland students and achievement gaps will be eliminated.

School closures during this period of the COVID-19 pandemic have potentially intensified existing inequities. The crisis has had a significant impact on our most vulnerable students. As schools reopen, local school systems should prioritize the study of data and focus on students who face obstacles in engagement in the continuity of learning process. Additionally, supporting the social/emotional well-being of students will be as important as equitable access to learning materials and learning opportunities, technology, and nutrition.

GettingSmart.com, a media channel that provides a place for education leaders to share innovations in learning and build a community driven by equity and access, recently published How to Reopen Schools: A 10-Point Plan Putting Equity at the Center. In the 10-Point Plan, the authors, Eric Tucker and Tom Vander Ark, describe solutions to help educators to "reimagine and strengthen systems" to meet the needs of all students.

Further information on equity can be found at the NYU Metro Center **Guide on Culturally Responsive – Sustaining School Reopening Centering Equity to Humanize the Process of Coming Back Together.**

Maryland's school systems must apply an equity lens as they develop every aspect of their plans for the transition to school opening, ensuring that "…for any program, practice, decision, or action, the impact on all students is addressed, with strategic focus on marginalized student groups." This commitment must continue to be a priority.

Now more than ever, the **Equity and Excellence: The Guide to Educational Equity** in Maryland should be utilized and the local school system equity plans be implemented to ensure that all students with the proper supports reach their full potential and succeed in school, regardless of race, gender, socioeconomic status, or other individual characteristics. We know that as schools reopen, a commitment must be made that all students, particularly students of color, students with disabilities, and students who have been traditionally underrepresented and not afforded equal opportunities, have access to strong instruction.

Principals need to ensure that students return to schools which have warm, welcoming, and supportive environments with the appropriate rigor and support to allow all students to succeed academically and socially and reach their full potential. Attention to experiences over the past six months must be made to support students socially and emotionally as well as academically.

III. Communication

School systems are encouraged to establish regular channels of communication as the plan for reopening of schools is under development and as schools reopen. Areas of planning for communication include key messages which should reflect the guiding principles of the school system's recovery plan. Determining the key messages provides a reference point for all communication updates. For example:

- All students, educators, and staff should feel comfortable and safe in their school environments.

- Student learning is paramount.

- Reflection on recent experiences with distance learning has informed the recovery planning.

- We are moving fast and we must stay flexible; we will explore, reflect, and acquire new knowledge to ensure continuous improvements are achieved.

COORDINATION

How will communications be coordinated? Usually, a school system has a communication officer, point person, or a small team, to direct public communications, and address inquiries from parents, media, and the general public. The roles of these individuals are even more important as school communities implement the work of reopening after closure and weeks of remote learning. The interdisciplinary planning of the school system for reopening will be better supported if communications are integrated from the outset.

Local school systems are encouraged to review methods which have proven to be the most effective in communications with constituents. Combining general methods with a targeted outreach should be considered. For example, @twitter and Facebook can be effective ways to reach a broad and diverse audience but may be inadequate when every parent needs information about an important deadline.

All staff need access to resources to assist them in responding to common questions from parents and the public. Staff also need specific directions about how to elevate questions to the appropriate level. Therefore, existing systems may need to be strengthened to address the needs of all community members and stakeholder groups. New tools and FAQs may need to be added to current resources.

STAKEHOLDERS

Who are the school system's key stakeholders and what specific information and guidance is needed? Teachers, principals and staff need to know their responsibilities for each reopening scenario. How will changes in the plan be communicated? The central office staff will need final plans as soon as possible to ensure that they can plan and prepare for all support systems to function effectively and efficiently, such as purchasing and student information systems.

Local school systems should establish a reopening stakeholder group to assist in the development of the school system's reopening plan. The group should contain a diverse group of stakeholders including parents, teachers, students, educators, and community members to encompass each system's unique student population and needs.

Families and students will need frequent and substantial messaging about safety guidelines and precautions. Throughout the reopening, families will need very specific information and resources about social distancing, transportation, food services, building sanitation, schedules, deadlines, and all safety procedures. Each school system is encouraged to create mechanisms for feedback. Additionally, local school systems are encouraged to expand capacity for ongoing and meaningful two-way communication, and enhance opportunities for collecting frequent feedback from families about their students' needs and a way to address parental concerns as the academic year progresses. Families may be asked to accommodate adjusted schedules and should have ample opportunity to provide feedback through surveys, a helpline, or other methods. As with the recovery plan itself, outreach should

consider the needs of essential workers, families with children on different academic schedules, families with students receiving special education and English language services, and families with limited mobility.

What information does the central office need from each group? The school system is encouraged to create mechanisms for feedback. Information from schools regarding student and staff needs should be a catalyst in determining any changes that are needed in the reopening plan.

What groups outside the school system need to be "in the loop?" For example, the local school systems will need to establish or continue strong communications with the local Health Departments that continue to be key partners in ensuring safety for staff and students. What is the best mechanism for continued coordination in this area? It could be a weekly call between the superintendent or their designee and someone at the health department assigned to support the school system. Diverse community organizations and other partners should be included in all general communications. Where a community school model is implemented, the partners supporting the school will need information directly from the school system and can be resources to help reach families and the general public.

School systems can solicit the local media to assist with the communications strategy. Having a designated contact who is responsive to the media will help ensure that the system's messages are reaching a wide audience and reinforce the community's role in recovery.

Elected officials' constituent offices are other important assets that may be utilized and should receive regular updates. Keeping these offices up-to-date helps elected officials serve their constituents and reinforce important messages from the school system.

METHODS AND FREQUENCY

Normally, school systems maintain robust communication strategies to keep students, parents, staff, and stakeholders engaged. Additional resources will be needed as school systems plan and execute a reopening plan. School systems are encouraged to match methods and frequency to the needs of others. A broad media strategy that includes the press, interviews, social media, and the school system's website will be effective if it is coordinated by one person or a small team.

Additional outreach and methods will be required for specific groups. Families will need information about where to turn for help with academics and other services. Systems are encouraged to create and publicize resources for families. The school system can support principals, teachers, and staff by providing FAQs and online resources. For some of the information, families need direct communication. Some school systems and schools utilize specific software for this purpose. If resources allow, a "helpline" can respond to specific needs of families. Responding quickly and consistently to concerns will convey the system's messages to the public with less opportunity for rumors and misinformation to spread.

The school system's website is a crucial resource for the public. Information can be posted for several audiences and should be frequently updated as needed. If there is not an automated way to link each school's website to the system's main site, ensure that each school prominently links to the main page to encourage families to rely on communications from the school system's central office. Whenever possible, messages in other languages should be made available.

Social media and the press are tools to convey information to the general public to reinforce the specific communications targeted to each group. At the same time, there is always the potential for incorrect information and rumors to circulate on social media, in posts to social media sites, and in comments. The communications team should consider designating responsibility for scanning for news and other reports, to reply and correct, as appropriate.

In addition to conveying specific information about the reopening of schools, school systems should identify opportunities to relay a personal message to all groups and the wider community. School systems should provide updates and encourage community responses. Streaming messages of thanks and appreciation can be tailored to teachers, paraprofessionals, and others. To enhance messaging, the MSDE will continue to share information with local school systems which can be communicated at the state and local levels.

IV. Instructional Programs

INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS AND ADJUSTED RETURN: SCHOOL OPTIONS

The **Maryland College and Career Ready Standards (MCCRS)** are essential in ensuring that students have a strong command of the skills and understandings associated with the critical areas. These skills and understandings are critical to building the foundational knowledge needed for the success of students. While all the MCCRS are important to educating the whole student, the current health crisis and the manner in which instruction must continue, necessitates the need for local school systems (LSS) to examine which standards have been taught and where the learning gaps exist due to the extended school closures. Local school systems are encouraged to identify the remaining standards to be taught and plan instruction focusing on the remaining standards.

In order to deliver a quality educational experience during these challenging times, students' social/emotional needs, special accommodations, and individual needs must be considered. Before instituting a revised curriculum for students, collaborate with central office level English for Speakers of Other Languages, Special Education, and School Counseling offices. The general education standards identified for Continuity of Learning should be considered when amending, as appropriate, a student's IEP goal(s)/objective(s) outside of an IEP team meeting, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Any amendment(s) made to a student's IEP should be agreed upon by the student's parent(s), documented, and changes provided to the parent and other members of the amended IEP service delivery team.

As schools are reopened and consideration is made to meet the needs of social distancing, the following are some scheduling options that might be considered. These suggestions are not the only options that may be considered by each LSS.

One-Day Rotation

On each of four days of the week, 25 percent of the students in a school report to school. This model would apply at all levels (e.g., Elementary, Middle and High) for each of the four days. Students report to school one full day a week at all levels (e.g., Elementary, Middle and High) for four days. Students will be provided assignments to support their learning on the days in which they do not report to school that could include paper, pencil, distance learning, or a combination.

Special Education, English for Speakers of Other Languages, and resource teachers will collaborate with classroom teachers to schedule and provide required services to students. Rotated pull-out classes may also reduce the student-teacher ratios to 10 or fewer. Fine Arts, Physical Education, and Health Education teachers will be included, to teach their respective content.   These classes will be offered as a rotation to provide the necessary content and support to students for a well-rounded curriculum while also helping to reduce the student-teacher ratios to 10 or fewer in each learning environment.

* One day is used for teacher planning and professional learning. Students will not report to school, distance learning will continue.

Two-Day Rotation

All students report to school two full days a week (e.g., Tuesday/Thursday or Wednesday/ Friday). Students would be provided assignments to support their learning on the days in which they do not report to school that could include paper, pencil, eLearning or a combination.

Special Education, English for Speakers of Other Languages, and resource teachers will collaborate with classroom teachers to schedule and provide required services to students. Rotated pull-out classes may also reduce the student-teacher ratios to 10 or fewer. Fine Arts, Physical Education, and Health Education teachers will be included, to teach their respective content. These classes will be offered as a rotation to provide the necessary content and support to students for a well-rounded curriculum while also helping to reduce the student-teacher ratios to 10 or fewer in each learning environment.

* One day is used for teacher planning and professional learning. Students will not report to school, distance learning will continue.

A/B Week

Half of the student population will report to school for four full days each week, while the remaining second half of the school population participates in distance learning at home. The student population will alternate between each week. All grade bands will be included. Students will be provided assignments to support their learning on the days in which they do not report to school that could include paper, pencil, eLearning or a combination.

Special Education, English for Speakers of Other Languages, and resource teachers will collaborate with classroom teachers to schedule and provide required services to students. Rotated pull-out classes may also reduce the student-teacher ratios to 10 or fewer. Fine Arts, Physical Education, and Health Education teachers will be included, to teach their respective content. These classes will be offered as a rotation to provide the necessary content and support to students for a well-rounded curriculum while also helping to reduce the student-teacher ratios to 10 or fewer in each learning environment.

* One day is used for teacher planning and professional learning. Students will not report to school, distance learning will continue.

Elementary Face-to-Face and Secondary Distance Learning

Elementary students will start school first and attend four full days a week, spread out across two buildings (e.g., Elementary and Middle) to reduce the student teacher ratio to support social distancing. Secondary students would complete distance learning. **This would continue until it is deemed appropriate by the public health officials that it is safe to relax the social distancing. Once it is deemed safe, elementary students would transition back to their home school and secondary students would start.**

Special Education, English for Speakers of Other Languages, and resource teachers will collaborate with classroom teachers to schedule and provide required services to students. Rotated pull-out classes may also reduce the student-teacher ratios to 10 or fewer. Fine Arts, Physical Education, and Health Education teachers will be included, to teach their respective content. These classes will be offered as a rotation to provide the necessary content and support to students for a well-rounded curriculum while also helping to reduce the student-teacher ratios to 10 or fewer in each learning environment.

* One day is used for teacher planning and professional learning. Students will not report to school, distance learning would continue.

Grade Band Phase-In

The grade band phase-in approach would begin when the public health officials deem it is safe to relax the social distancing. Elementary students will return to school first, for a week. Middle school students would report the second and high school would report the third week. Middle and high school students will continue distance learning while waiting to phase back into school.

Charter Schools

For school systems that include public charter schools, there should be consideration of any previous agreements made, and an opportunity for charter schools to implement alternative plans within the guidance provided by the State and the school system. For example, some charter schools currently operate on schedules and calendars that differ from those of the school system.

Environmental Education and Literacy

Although the location that learning occurs has changed, opportunities to continue to motivate students to make decisions and take action to preserve and protect Maryland's natural resources remain.

Use of the outdoors and natural spaces
Finding ways to use outdoor learning spaces allows school systems to continue an instructional program in environmental literacy. According to research, benefits to student interactions within nature spaces extends beyond improved cognition

to include mental health general well-being and restoration, with the potential to decrease anxiety and stress. As with any educational experience, safety, health, and accessibility are the first priorities.

Parent and caregiver involvement

Considerations for parents and caregivers to support outdoor and environmental education activities outside of the classroom should be based on students' age-appropriate ability level and the complexity of the learning experience.

Restructuring school time

As schools consider scheduling options for reopening, these suggestions are not the only options that may be considered. While some aspects of environmental education can occur in a digital and online environment, the outdoor field experience that is at the heart of the Meaningful Watershed Educational Experience (MWEE) may need to be completed face-to-face with teachers leading instruction with small groups of students.

- Hybrid Face-to-Face and Distance Learning: If time is limited for face-to-face instruction, students could spend time planning the investigation through an online format and conduct the investigation in person with teacher guidance. After the face-to-face learning experience, students can construct explanations and arguments with evidence from the investigations from distance learning measures.

- Distance Learning: Elements of the MWEE model can be conducted in or around the home. Students could use the environment in or around their home to make and record observations about how much or how many of something may exist, such as flora, fauna, weather patterns, or land use types. Self-guided inquiry maximizes student voices, which is a culturally responsive instructional strategy. Using common household items, students could build, test, and redesign solutions to environmental issues using common household items and reflect on the engineering design process.

- Developmentally appropriate environmental stewardship and civic action can occur outside the classroom as students brainstorm and evaluate the results of their investigations, propose and take action.

CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION (CTE)

Approximately 115,000 high school students are enrolled in CTE programs of study across 24 school systems. There are 55 state-approved programs of study. Each program of study provides the opportunity for students to earn postsecondary and/or industry credentials and participate in work-based learning experiences. COVID-19 school closures during the 2019-2020 school year impacted the ability of CTE students to complete work-based learning and core content hours needed to earn required credentials in career fields. Each school system developed a Continuity of Learning plan that addressed how students would continue learning while school buildings were closed. CTE students engaged in online experiences that reinforced core content. In some cases, students completed online modules that could be applied toward credential hour requirements. As schools reopen, there are several CTE-specific factors that must be considered.

Assess status of CTE inventory

 CTE supplies may have been impacted due to COVID-19 school closure. For example, several schools donated CTE equipment or used CTE supplies to support COVID-19 recovery efforts. Plants required for agricultural and environmental science programs may not have been cared for consistently and food required for culinary programs may have spoiled while schools were closed. As a result, CTE programs may need supplies replenished prior to reopening schools. CTE Directors can contact MSDE Regional CTE Grant Specialists for information on how Perkins or CARES funds can be used to replenish CTE supplies.

Disinfect CTE equipment and workspaces

 A process and schedule must be implemented to disinfect CTE equipment. It may be impractical to individually disinfect all CTE items such as nails, wires, clay, etc. As a result, it is recommended that CTE students wear disposable gloves, face masks, and aprons at all times when working with CTE equipment. A process must be established to recover and disinfect loaned equipment from health care facilities. CTE Directors can contact MSDE Regional CTE Grant Specialists for information on how Perkins or Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act funds can be used to purchase new equipment in the event that

loaned equipment cannot be recovered or appropriately disinfected for reuse.

Accelerate completion of credential requirements

Schools systems must consider implementing a compressed curriculum for CTE courses that focus on essential content. Options must be made available to engage students in learning experiences prior to the school year or before or after school. Diagnostic tests, formative assessments, or other assessment options in CTE can be implemented at the beginning of the school year to ascertain learning loss and progress. Information gathered can be used to inform curricular compression and instructional interventions. Career plans, secondary transition plans, and IEP requirements for CTE students must also be reviewed and addressed.

Modify work-based learning experiences

CTE Directors can contact employer partners to identify opportunities for students to complete work-based learning hours or industry-mentored projects virtually. When virtual experiences are not practical, social distancing guidelines must be followed. These guidelines must also be followed when clients come to school buildings to receive services (e.g.: Automotive Technician, Cosmetology, Childcare). Consider having clearly defined pathways for clients to travel when in the school building, implementing contactless payment systems, and establishing a process to disinfect work areas before and after services are administered. These guidelines would also apply to student enterprises such as the sale of coffee by students.

Transport students to career centers, worksites, and community colleges

Several CTE students take courses at both a comprehensive high school and career center or community college. When implementing modified schedules, consideration must be given to how social distancing guidelines will be applied when transporting CTE students. School systems may consider increasing course offerings in math, science, ELA, and other content areas at career centers to limit student travel. School systems may also consider allowing CTE students to take additional courses (e.g.: math, science, ELA) at a community college for high school credit to limit student travel. Several school systems provide transportation for students to and from worksites. School systems must adhere to social distancing guidelines when transporting students and ensure that the worksites adhere to social distancing guidelines.

The Division of Career and College Readiness will provide additional guidance and support to CTE Directors as school buildings reopen.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

While the extended school closures have a significant impact on the education of Maryland students statewide, it is recognized that students with disabilities may experience increased distress and negative educational consequences due to the changes in instructional method and environment. There is a continuum of teaching and learning connected by the individualized Continuity of Learning plans (IEP as written, amended IEP, or revised IEP) for students with disabilities as we prepare for, and implement, recovery efforts.

The provision of special education and related services operates within the broader context of the general education curriculum and instruction, which continues to be a driver. Though this situation has impacted the ability of local public agencies to fully implement some students' Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), it is important to remember that a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) continues to be the touchstone for the IEP process, including special education eligibility and services during the extended school closures through the return to school and recovery programming. Now and during recovery, it is essential to provide FAPE and the provision of early intervention and special education services (IDEA) to the greatest extent possible.

The **Continuity of Learning Provisions for Students with Disabilities during the Extended School Closure due to the COVID-19 Pandemic flowchart** provides a visual framework for providing students with FAPE, while complying with procedural requirements under federal and State law. As this framework highlights, each public agency is required to consider the unique needs of the student, their IEP, and the local school system's Continuity of Learning plan to develop and implement, as appropriate, changes to

the student's special education program within the context of distance learning. Local school systems and public agencies have been called upon to be creative and innovative in considering alternative service delivery methods.

The **Continuity of Learning Provisions for Students with Disabilities after the Extended School Closure due to the COVID-19 Pandemic flowchart** provides a visual framework for the transition back to school and recovery programming. As local public agencies begin taking steps to reopen school buildings under the leadership of the State Superintendent, they must keep the FAPE obligation at the forefront of their decision-making. This transition period takes into account the needs of the individualized student and provides flexibility for response, as appropriate. Any protocols that local public agencies develop to return students:

1. Addresses student-specific needs arising from the transition back into school buildings;

2. Considers whether or not a student has experienced a regression of skills and/or lack of progress; and

3. If regression and/or a lack of progress is present, identifies opportunities for recovery, including additional, new, or different services and accommodations.

Local public agencies and school communities are encouraged to continue to refer to the DEI/SES Technical Assistance Bulletin webpage of the MSDE website for more in-depth topical guidance addressing special education and related services during the extended school closures. Specific information has been added to provide specific recovery planning considerations.

General Considerations for Recovery Efforts for Students with Disabilities

- **Role of the family in the teaching/learning process.** Parents of students with disabilities have always had a decision-making voice and required participation at the IEP Team. Remote learning has increased parent capacity (with ongoing coaching and support by educators) to provide supplemental instruction and progress monitoring. In recovery efforts, leveraging this skill and elevating the supportive role of the family to accelerate student progress is essential.

- **Integration of technology.** During this period of continuity of learning technology has presented new uncharted opportunities for educators, school administrators, and families to leverage the benefits of technology to support learning and meaningful parent participation for students with disabilities.

- **Maintain a focus on Social/Emotional Wellbeing.** In recovery efforts, now more than ever, it is evident that schools play a critical role in the overall whole-child development process and quality of life for families. Research makes it clear that, compared to adults, children are more vulnerable to the emotional impact of traumatic events that disrupt their daily lives. Considerations for students with special needs, those who have a history of trauma, are broad and overarching.

- **School Operations**
  Consider the following key areas:

  - Maryland Infants and Toddlers Program

  - Related Services (e.g., speech language, OT, PT)

  - Transportation (see **Considerations for Transportation Needs for Students with Disabilities during School Recovery Planning**)

  - Non-public Special Education Schools

    - Consider students currently served through nonpublic special education schools remaining until schools resume normal operations in their totality.

    - Consider LSS collaboration to promote unity in support of nonpublic school plans for returning to the school house.

  - School Aged Special Education Services

    - Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Blind, Low-vision, and Deafblind Students

    - Students with disabilities that require extensive intensive, individualized instruction, and supports

  - Secondary Transition

Hire the required/additional number of teachers/staff to support the delivery of FAPE and IDEA.

ENGLISH LEARNERS (ELS)

The equitable education of ELs is safeguarded by various civil rights laws and policies, as well as by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). Maryland school systems are required by COMAR to provide instructional assistance and services to enable ELs to attain English proficiency, develop high levels of academic language, and achieve at high levels in academic subjects. School systems may need to be flexible and adapt their English Language Development (ELD) programs and service delivery models.

Strategies to Consider for Continuing English Language Development Services and Ensuring Access to General Education

- Provide small group and individual support based on each EL's needs

- Facilitate collaboration and co-planning between content and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) teachers

- Use scaffolding instructional strategies

- Focus on developing productive language skills such as speaking and writing

- Use formative assessments to identify gaps

- Develop digital opportunities for review and recover

- Provide office hours to touch base with individual ELs when needed

Considerations for Outreach to Families of English Learners

- Provide documents to families of ELs in an accessible format, including translated documents and talking points

- Build in time for translation in order to provide timely communication

- Consider personal check-ins with ELs and families, using an interpreter if needed

- Explore strategies to increase the access and understanding of families to online instruction and resources

- Provide support for the social emotional needs of ELs and families

Screening of New English Learners

Once schools reopen and students are attending schools, local school systems (LSSs) will use state-identified ELD screening tools to test students for ELD services eligibility. However, due to modified school schedules, some LSSs may still need to identify students as provisional ELs until all students have been screened and identified as ELs.

The U.S. Department of Education has released a Fact Sheet on **Providing Services to English Learners during the COVID-19 Outbreak** which provides additional information.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR REMOTE/DISTANCE LEARNING

Distance learning is the overarching term for a variety of learning modalities involving virtual experiences whether they are asynchronous or synchronous. As decisions are made, a full understanding of the benefits, limitations, and considerations of each modality is important.

Synchronous learning – learning that happens in real time with interaction between the teacher and students that occurs in a face to face environment or in a virtual classroom setting.

Asynchronous learning – learning that occurs online without real-time interaction or instruction by an educator.

Blended Learning (hybrid) is a combination of synchronous and asynchronous teaching and learning that requires access to the Internet, web conferencing tools, and a learning platform. Local school system educators deliver instruction aligned with the school's curriculum and monitor student attendance, growth, and needs. The use of the local school system curriculum allows for the flexibility of moving between instruction received entirely at home and the instruction delivered in the brick and mortar environment.

- **Option 1:** Blended Learning can be delivered through the partial asynchronous use of a vendor course and/or resources complimented by synchronous instruction (at least 20% of the instructional time) provided by the local school system educator to students in the classroom and/or remote locations.

- **Option 2:** Blended learning can be delivered synchronously with the local school system educator instructing students in a classroom while broadcasting this instruction to students in remote locations. This instruction is supported by asynchronous activities and resources.

- **Option 3:** Blended Learning can be delivered virtually through synchronous instruction to students by the local school system educator and supported by asynchronous lessons and resources aligned with the local school curriculum.

Examples of how web conferencing tools can support blended learning beyond full class instruction are by providing opportunities for social emotional connections, differentiating for small groups, meetings that involve parents, delivering conferences, and providing tutoring/enrichment, and office hours.

A Virtual School (Virtual Program/Academy, CyberSchool, Online School), is based on asynchronous learning that provides limited interactions between students and the teacher. This type of teaching and learning delivers a local school system's curriculum that requires access to the Internet and a learning platform. The student courses used are either MSDE approved courses or vendor courses that have been reviewed for content and accessibility by local school systems. Either vendor teachers or MSDE approved content specific educators manage these courses. This modality requires daily assistance and oversight from guardians, especially for K-8 students. There is a process in place to request advanced approval from the State Superintendent for local school systems who wish to offer a locally developed virtual school or to contract with a virtual school vendor. Process documentation is available by request at **mvs.msde@maryland.gov**.

A survey conducted with LSS Chief Information Officers reflect that additional equitable access to devices and Internet access for some of Maryland's students is a necessity.   To provide equitable delivery of teaching and learning consider the following areas:

- **Instruction:** Leverage existing low-cost methods of remote learning that can be accessed via the widest possible variety of technology platforms.

- **Devices**: A global device shortage and interruptions to the supply chain has resulted in new device acquisition delays. Public schools may consider leveraging existing devices bought by families so that students who have access to Bring Your Own Devices (BYOD) now can experience a continuity of learning immediately. This may include Smartphones. Local school systems could leverage online learning tools and curricula that work well on phones. Students will need access to devices with a traditional keyboard. Regardless of devices used by students, student privacy and security must be maintained for safety. Taking into account the age and functionality of devices, when budgets are developed, ongoing maintenance and refresh of devices will need to be considered.

- **Staffing**: The IT staffing resources needed to integrate and support the increase in devices and technology applications may require additional IT staff. The investment in technology must be supported and sustained. Maintaining IT staffing is crucial to ensure sufficient ratio of technical staff to system users. Existing ratios are not equitable among school systems.

V. Support Programs

PROGRAMS TO REINFORCE LEARNING:

Summer Program

Summer programs provide educational opportunities to students during the summer months when schools traditionally observe summer break or summer vacation. These may also be called extended-year programs. The programs may be utilized for reteaching and reinforcement of learning gaps.

- **Original Credit Classes** – Original credit classes are required classes that are used to determine and document that students have met academic requirements. Academic credits are awarded upon completing and passing required coursework in a specific academic area.

- **Credit Recovery** – Credit recovery gives at-risk students who have failed a class, the opportunity to complete missing coursework, revise coursework, or retake a course in order to earn academic credit. Credit-recovery courses may be scheduled during normal school hours, after school, on vacation breaks, on-line, over the summer, or in alternate settings in order to meet the students' needs.

Enrichment Classes for Middle and High School

Enrichment classes are educational opportunities that go beyond what is taught in a traditional classroom and challenge students who have already mastered the traditional curriculum. They can occur before or after school or during the summer.

Middle School Assistance for Special Needs and At-Risk Students

Educational programs that provide services, resources, training, advocacy, and support to students and families of students who have special needs or at-risk for failure.

Saturday School

A type of program where the student attends school on Saturdays to reinforce instructional skills or to encourage positive behavior.

Dual Enrollment

A program which will increase the number of students participating in dual enrollment programs at a high school and a local college. This allows the student to earn credits that apply to both high school diploma requirements and college graduation requisites.

Modified Calendars

A modified calendar that restructures the traditional school calendar to provide more continuous learning throughout the school year. It may include Saturday school, extended school days, or reduced summer time off for students. Types of modified calendars include:

- **Start School Early: Reduce Summer Time off for Students** – students would begin school earlier in the summer than a traditional school calendar.

- **Extended School Days in the Afternoon** – student school day is extended beyond the normal school dismissal schedule.

- **Open Schools Earlier in the Mornings** – student school day is extended by including an earlier start time.

- **Night Classes for Students** – student attends school in the evening.

- **Extend 2020-2021 School Year** – restructures the traditional school calendar to provide more continuous learning

throughout the school year and reduces summer time off for students.

- **Incremental Student Return Based on Grade** – returning students to school by grade to allow for social distancing.

- **Select Day Rotation with One Day for Remediation** – alternative schedule to provide for support to students with increased instructional needs.

- **Scheduling Based on Facility Usage** – utilization of multiple buildings for a single school to allow for social distancing.

Maryland Out of School Time (OST)

OST programs will continue to provide opportunities for academic enrichment which includes providing instructional services to help students, particularly students who attend low-performing schools, to meet State and local student academic achievement standards in core academic subjects including language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. In addition, Maryland OST programs will offer students a broad array of additional services, programs, and activities such as: substance abuse and alcohol prevention, violence prevention, counseling, art, music, and technology education. Lastly, Maryland OST programs will continue to offer families of students served by community learning centers opportunities for literacy instruction and related educational development. State and federal funded Maryland OST programs continue implementation through the utilization of the following recommendations:

- Alternating/staggered days of instruction for students;

- Reducing class sizes to allow for fewer students;

- Placing student desks 6 feet from each other as possible in classrooms;

- Requiring students and staff to wear face coverings;

- Restricting students from changing classrooms; but rather have teachers change classrooms to avoid hallway traffic;

- Eliminating assemblies, field trips/recreation activities;

- Utilizing online/virtual parent trainings and meetings;

- Increasing health and hygiene measures; and

- Staggering school bus schedules to allow fewer students on a bus at a time.

COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

Community schools have played an important role throughout the COVID-19 related school closures and served families by providing food distribution, hygienic supplies, internet access, technology equipment, school supplies, mental health supports, housing information, and other crisis supports as needed. As Maryland moves towards recovery, community schools have a critical role in providing continued support.

- **Needs Assessment**
  Most community schools throughout the State conducted a needs assessment prior to the COVID-19 closures. This data could be used by a variety of stakeholders to examine existing needs prior to the COVID-19 closures and to predict how school closures might have exacerbated these needs. Any asset mapping conducted as part of the needs assessment could also be used to develop strategic partnerships that can support students' reentry into school.

- **Support for Continuity of Learning**
  Community schools can utilize resources and partnerships to ensure that families are equipped to support students with distance learning. They may assist in the procurement of wireless internet access, devices, school supplies, and other materials essential for at-home learning. They may also connect families with resources and training to help them support their students with at-home learning.

- **Family Outreach**
  As students return to school, community schools can continue their outreach to families and connect them with the vital services that they need. Community School Coordinators could work with school social workers and pupil personnel workers to provide tiered outreach to families who are most in need of additional services and support. They can support families in ensuring that students are attending school daily; refer families for expanded mental health services; connect families to organizations that provide essential services and crisis supports; and provide parent education classes on managing stress, anxiety, and trauma.

- **Academic Enrichment and Out of School Time (OST)**
  Community School Coordinators should work with community partners, lead agencies, and other stakeholders to develop extracurricular programming that addresses both students' social emotional needs and academic learning loss. OST programming, including after school, weekend, and summer programming, could be used for academic enrichment, tutoring, social emotional support, mentoring, or supplemental instruction designed to close exacerbated learning gaps for striving learners. These efforts should be undertaken in coordination with the principal, Instructional Leadership Team, and in alignment with the School Improvement Plan.

- **Community Support**
  Unemployment and underemployment have disproportionately affected low-income communities, which are served by community schools. Community schools could utilize partnerships to expand adult education, language classes, employment services, health services, parenting support programming, etc. Any programming for adults should be guided by the need assessment and community feedback, and should adhere to social distancing guidelines outlined by the health department.

CHILD CARE – INCLUDING BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAMS

Many elementary schools have child care programs that are co-located on the school site or operate as before or after school programs. Some are also located on high school campuses. These are licensed child care programs overseen by the Office of Child Care in the Division of Early Childhood at MSDE. As LSSs make decisions on opening, it is critical that this be coordinated with the Office of Child Care because regulations and temporary operating procedures have been put in place to ensure the health and safety of staff and children.

During the state of emergency, MSDE established two programs to serve essential persons needing child care: Essential Personnel Child Care (EPCC) and Essential Personnel School Age (EPSA). These operate under specific guidance developed by MSDE in coordination with the Maryland Department of Health. Guidance and FAQs regarding class/group size, temperature checks, cloth coverings, closures, and other important considerations during the recovery period may be useful. The resources, including recommendations for the Center for Disease Control (CDC) can be found here:
https://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/covid-faqs

Local school systems will want to consider opening child care programs prior to opening schools to ensure school staff have adequate care for their children while they are at work. Child care programs will need to be well-resourced with cleaning and medical supplies and the ability to purchase food and paper goods in bulk. Resources to support their success can be found here:
https://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/child-care-providers-serving-essential-personnel

The Division of Early Childhood has worked with child care providers and stakeholders to develop the draft **Maryland Together: Maryland's Recovery Plan for Child Care.**

VI. Professional Learning

Remote learning is new and all staff involved will need to be trained on how to deliver instruction via the web. Through additional professional learning opportunities including online pedagogy, educators will be able to transfer their high-quality teaching practices to the virtual environment. Professional learning should be provided to teachers on designing equitable instruction regardless of whether it is delivered in a virtual or a pen and pencil environment.

Mentors and coaches should be provided professional learning on appropriate pedagogy, strategies, and technical aspects of mentoring/coaching in virtual environments. Induction programs should consider how school closures impact professional learning, mentoring, and coaching for non-tenured teachers. Professional learning for first year teachers in 2020-2021 school year may need to address shortened student teacher experiences.

Administrators will need professional learning related to the pedagogy and strategies for distance learning. This is necessary in order for administrators to assist, observe, and provide feedback to educators teaching in an online environment.

- Consider partnering and collaborating with institutions of higher education to offer courses related to teaching and learning through various delivery models, including teaching in a virtual environment.

- Consider providing training for parents to support their children who are learning in a remote or virtual environment.

It is important to regularly assess the professional needs of educators to provide high quality, evidence-based professional learning practices. In light of the COVID -19 pandemic, a recent comprehensive assessment was conducted collaboratively by MSDE's Office of Information Technology, the Office of Accountability, and the Office of Instructional Technology to assess existing technology and teaching and learning needs in each school system. The survey revealed that additional professional learning was needed for all stakeholders involved in educating our students. In addition, the survey revealed that strong consideration must be given to providing additional funding and staffing to support professional learning.

Consider some of the following professional learning opportunities that are available through the Division of Curriculum, Instructional Improvement, and Professional Learning:

- Expand the use of the Active Online Teaching in Maryland course (3 credits) and Shadow Experience (1 credit)

  - Offered by MSDE or through the LSS that choses to use a section for its LSS educators and have it supported by a qualified facilitator

  - Title II A and other funding sources will support these efforts

  - Graduates from this course and the shadow experience will be able to facilitate other MSDE student and professional learning online courses and any courses leased or purchased from vendors

- Develop an "Online Teaching in Maryland Light" modules that can be compiled into an online credit-bearing course

  - Work with LSS approved and experienced facilitators and LSS educators experienced at various levels of distance learning to identify gaps, strategies, and pedagogy for the development of the modules – Title II A funding.

  - Course could be self-paced resulting in a badge or certificate, or MSDE decide to submit it for 1 or 2 CPD credits - if it is self-paced without facilitator input and is only badged, it could be free

- Modules will place emphasis on disadvantaged children to include English Learners and children with disabilities.

- Educators are encouraged to provide online instruction on a monthly or weekly basis utilizing the LSS's instructional online platform. This will help make both educators and students more comfortable with the virtual environment - work involved, online strategies, and time management. This could be delivered during the regular school day to ensure equity of access.

- Professional learning communities, communities of practice, and peer coaching communities are encouraged in order to provide educators collaborative opportunities that support professional growth.

VII. Information Regarding Educators

EDUCATOR CERTIFICATION

The ongoing COVID-19 health crisis has not disrupted the ability of the MSDE to receive and process applications for certification. While the majority of our staff are teleworking, the Office of Certification is currently processing applications within the standard eight-week timeline. Office staff are available to assist applicants, existing educators, and LSS with their certification-related inquiries and needs by telephone and by email. As the Certification Assistance Line is closed, the Office of Certification is responding to questions from the public via the **certinfo.msde@maryland.gov** inbox. Those educators who are under contract with a LSS should continue to discuss their certification needs directly with their employer.

Assignment

- Code of Maryland Regulations state that each teacher employed in the public school systems of Maryland shall hold a professional certificate in the teacher's area of major assignment.

- Those same regulations allow for a teacher to be assigned outside of their area of certification.

- A teacher should not be assigned to more than two classes outside of their area of certification. If a LSS must assign a teacher to more than two classes outside of their area of certification, the teacher must work toward obtaining the certificate. For each consecutive year after the first year that a teacher is assigned to teach more than two classes outside the teacher's area of certification, the teacher shall earn at least six semester hours per year toward certification in the out-of-area assignment before continuing the assignment.

- A list of teaching areas may be found on our website at **www.mdcert.org**

Emergency Certificate

On April 28, 2020, the State Board of Education (SBOE) voted to adopt amendments to the Code of Maryland Regulation (COMAR) 13A.12.01.14 Waivers and Special Certification Provisions on an emergency basis. The Administrative Executive and Legislative Review Committee approved the emergency regulation on May 26, 2020.

The amendment outlines the conditions of an emergency certificate, established to be issued during a state of emergency at the authorization of the State Superintendent, to those who meet the outlined criteria. The purpose of this certificate is to allow those educator candidates who have completed all of the requirements of certification with the exception of assessments and/or clinical experiences, the ability to accept a position with a Maryland local school system, state institution, or nonpublic school approved under COMAR 13A.09.10, as they complete the remainder of the professional certification requirements.

On May 26, 2020, the emergency regulation took effect and will remain in effect until November 20, 2020. During this time, it is the intention of the MSDE to recommend the promulgation of this amendment through the standard regulatory process.

Renewals of Existing Certificates

- Per the Governor's Executive order, all educator certificates that expire during the state of emergency will be extended for 30 days from the date that the state of emergency is declared over.

- The MSDE has approved a new Continuing Professional Development (CPD) experience to award educators up to six CPD credits for having implemented their LSS Continuity of Learning Plan. This experience is available only to the specific individuals required to hold a certificate via Code of Maryland Regulation (COMAR) 13A.12.01.03B for renewal of a professional certificate.

In response to school closures and public health concerns, CPD course providers may choose to modify face-to-face instruction to

hybrid/blended or online instruction. The MSDE is establishing clear parameters for LSS that have approved CPD courses occurring in spring or summer 2020, and want to modify the instructional mode of delivery.

Praxis Assessments

ETS, the MSDE's Praxis testing vendor, is working to develop an at-home testing option for certain Praxis tests and will waive fees for test rescheduling, if necessary. Additional information and updates are available on the **ETS Praxis testing website.**

RECOVERY PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS: NON-PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The Nonpublic School Approval Branch of the MSDE is responsible for the regulatory oversight of nonpublic schools located throughout Maryland. These schools fall into three distinct categories; nonpublic schools approved under Code of Maryland Regulation (COMAR) 13A.09.09 (private pay), nonpublic schools approved under COMAR 13A.09.10 (publicly funded), and registered church-exempt schools. The first two types of schools are considered "approved" because they hold a Certificate of Approval issued by the Maryland State Board of Education. Registered church-exempt schools are exempt from the education regulations set forth by the Maryland State Board of Education because they are governed and operated by a bona fide church organization (Education Article §2-206). Each type of program is a legally sufficient way to operate in Maryland.

Maryland Law, Education Article, §2-206, Annotated Code of Maryland, exempts nonpublic schools that are governed and operated by a bona fide church organization from holding a Certificate of Approval from the State Board of Education. This means that a church-operated school is not required to meet the educational standards that have been established by the Maryland State Board of Education for

Nonpublic Schools under COMAR 13A.09.09 (private pay) and Registered Church Exempt Schools

Memos to nonpublic schools approved under COMAR 13A.09.09 and registered church-exempt schools, dated March 19, 2020, indicated the recommendation for these schools to close. The memos stated that these schools are "governed and operated by private organizations. The Legal Authority of each nonpublic school is responsible for making the determination regarding its school closure as a result of COVID-19." During the recovery phase from this pandemic, decisions regarding the operating status of each nonpublic school (for both nonpublic schools approved under COMAR 13A.09.09 and registered church-exempt schools) will continue to be made by the school's Legal Authority.

Nonpublic Schools under COMAR 13A.09.10 (publicly funded)

A memo to nonpublic schools approved under COMAR 13A.09.10, dated March 17, 2020, stated that these schools "are required to be closed through April 15, 2020, and for any subsequent required extensions." For schools providing special education services, the recovery phase from this pandemic involves planning with local school system partners (and IEP teams as applicable) to determine the most appropriate process for students placed in these schools to return to their educational settings. Planning should consider provision of transportation, special education instruction, and related services, as applicable.

A local school system may elect to open schools in a gradual fashion, (e.g. opening schools to specific grades only). If this decision is made, the Legal Authority of each nonpublic school approved under COMAR 13A.09.10 may choose to either gradually open in accordance with a local school system or open to all students, as each school deems appropriate.

VIII. Preparation and Services

SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY NUTRITION PROGRAMS

Engaging stakeholders at the LSS level will be critical in the process of ensuring continuity of equity and access for student nutrition, and for successful transition of school nutrition program operations from current pandemic emergency feeding models to a model for reopening schools. Refer to Appendix B for School and Nutrition Services for Roles, Services, and Strategies.

Key Operational Considerations for developing and implementing a plan to reopen School Nutrition Programs as a component of the "Roadmap to Recovery: A Public Health Guide for Governors," including work to Create a Framework for Reopening (Step 7, pp 21-23) is described below.

Who should be included in efforts to develop and implement the framework for reopening Nutrition Programs in Schools?

- Maryland State Department of Education, Office of School and Community Nutrition Programs (MSDE OSCNP) for communication and administration of Child Nutrition Program (CNP) requirements and compliance for school meals, federal CNP policy, waivers, USDA Foods programs, the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP), and coordinated technical assistance for School Food and Nutrition Programs in Maryland.

- Maryland State Department of Education for coordinated leadership to include a plan for continuity of student meals programs in the overall requirements for reopening of schools at the local level.

- Maryland State Department of Health (MDH) for information and coordination about health and safety plans and implementation, reporting and trace back of virus outbreak in schools; Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) and protective measures for students and CNP staff; guidance for implementation of social distancing, sanitation, handwashing and other measures to reduce risk of viral spread during student consumption of meals in the school building; guidance for mask hygiene (e.g., washing, storing, distributing, and using reusable masks); guidance on use of masks by children and youth; guidance on social distancing protocols for congregate meal settings.

- Local Health Departments by jurisdiction for amendments to school Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) plans to accommodate COVID-19 hygiene measures; recommendations for Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for sanitation of school kitchens, cafeterias, food warehouses, central production kitchens/facilities; and for social distancing in food transportation, distribution, and consumption, and local compliance requirements.

- Local School Superintendent and/or Board of Education for coordination of staff and facilities to accommodate students eating meals during the school day and ensuring continuity of school nutrition for all students, according to program requirements.

- Local School Food and Nutrition Service Director for logistics related to school food service operations, including: planning and implementation of production and distribution models for required student food programs; food supply chain and availability in their area; staffing plan for reopening schools with consideration for additional staff needed to complete enhanced cleaning and sanitation requirements; requirements for PPE and other measures to ensure safety of essential school food program employees.

- Local School Nursing representatives for measures to include daily screening of school nutrition staff prior to entering buildings/beginning work; protocols for immediate containment of students and staff who present symptoms and other measures to mitigate the spread of viral outbreak.

- Other stakeholders as determined at the LSS level.

MARYLAND CENTER FOR SCHOOL SAFETY

2020 COVID-19 Pandemic Reopening Guidelines and Issues for Consideration

The COVID-19 pandemic has presented unique challenges to LSSs across the State of Maryland. While emergency planning and recovery plans are part of any Emergency Operations Plan of a school facility, COVID-19 has posed additional concerns and requirements from a health perspective that will require non-traditional operations to facilitate a return to the learning environment.

The Maryland Center for School Safety has developed these guidelines for LSSs to utilize when working towards reopening. While comprehensive, this document is not all encompassing and should not be used as a stand-alone resource. As always, work with your respective Health Department to ensure up to date protocols are in use towards recovery/reopening.

The first step will be to **appoint/assign a dedicated Recovery Leader or Incident Commander**. Assigning an Incident Commander will allow management and a designated team to prepare for reopening of school facilities. Designated team personnel should include representation from multiple divisions/resources within your LSS and community.

 Key areas have been identified to assist with Re-entry into schools and are aligned with the U.S. Department of Education Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools Technical Assistance Centers Recovery Fact Sheet identified below (Note – additional information on areas identified below are further developed in other sections of the Recovery Plan):

Personnel:

Preparation for Opening

- Work with your local health department, determine when it is deemed safe to begin resumption of use of your educational facilities. Your local health department will have up to date data to assist with observation of trends of infection

- Determine how faculty and staff will receive timely, factual information regarding return to work

- Identify faculty/staff shortages due to:
    - loss of staff life, staff sickness
    - staff with underlying health issues
    - staff caring for sick relative or loss of staff family member
    - resignations of faculty/staff
    - retirement of faculty/staff

    Note: If loss of any kind is determined to have occurred, see Mental Health Section

- Determine if face coverings (not PPE) are to be utilized by faculty/staff/students and what the LSS policy will be for adherence to the policy

- Review procedures for sending ill persons home from the school facility

- Determine if pre-designated entry and exit paths will be utilized

- Determine pre-designated drop-off points for buses, parents

- Determine if class changes are static (students remain in room, teachers change classrooms) or Fluid (Students change classrooms)

- If fluid period/topic changes occur, determine:
    - Is locker use allowed, if not, secure from use
    - Determine distance and flow paths through facility, mark flooring, walls appropriately

- Determine communication and outreach methods to students and parents for notification of above
- Determine a "Use of restroom" policy that maintains distancing,

Post opening

- Communicate to Faculty/Staff/Students proper hygiene techniques
- Communicate the "Use of restroom" policy to students
- Post signage within restrooms on proper hygiene practices
- Provide communication to students, parents on new academic policies in place

Mental Health:

- Support services for loss of any staff, students, or family
- Mobilize crisis recovery team to provide emotional and psychological support
- If school community has experienced a loss of life, establish "safe rooms" as needed within each facility for counseling service provision
- Announce counseling support services available to faculty and staff via Employee Assistance or other Programs that are available
- Hold faculty and staff meetings to provide information on signs and symptoms of stress to observe in students, faculty, and staff
- Identify and provide information on safe room function and location
- Communicate counseling support services available to students
- Have available for staff, parents, and families educational materials on loss and grief and ways to cope with stress
- Work with faculty and staff on identifying families in need of long term physical and mental health support and intervention and provide resources to families
- Work with LSSs on how to handle commemorations, memorial activities, and permanent marker establishment, if allowed
- Determine how memorial activities will strike a balance among honoring a loss, resuming school activities and class routines, return to schedules and maintaining hope for the future

Facilities:

- Determine if daily screening is required by Local Health Department
- If daily screening is implemented, determine who shall be trained, time requirements to complete entry into facility and adjust daily start times accordingly
- Determine school-based procedures for staff, student, parent communications
- Review procedures for sending ill persons home from the school facility
- Has signage been increased in restrooms on proper hygiene techniques
- Determine if additional cleaning requirements are needed prior to reopening of school facilities and type(s) of cleaning allowed
- Determine if locker use will be allowed, if not where will materials/coats be stored
- Determine if "spacing and flow" through hallways, cafeterias and open seating area markings are required and if so, install
- Re-order/stocking of cleaning/disinfectant supplies for each facility

- Set classrooms up with allowed seating distances as determined by Health Department

- Re-sanitize facilities as directed, throughout the day, if required

This section utilizes information from resources such as: The U.S. Dept. of Education's Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools Center (REMS), The National Association of School Psychologists (NASP), The King County Washington Schools, and conversation with our school safety partners in Virginia and Delaware.

TRANSPORTATION

Options regarding safety of transporting students:

- The State should provide notice to school systems (transportation departments) two weeks or more prior to having to transport any children.

- School buses that have not been inspected since fall should have a safety inspection prior to transporting any children (MVA).

- For school buses that have not been used for the past 30 days, there is no need to do any thorough cleaning because any virus will have been killed off.

- Any school bus used for food distribution should be cleaned prior to transporting.

- School bus drivers will need to attend in-services before transporting students to be informed about new policies and procedures, as well as understand how to effectively clean their bus.

- There is a high level of concern that these drivers/ attendants (many of which are in the high risk category for COVID-19) will be unwilling to put themselves at-risk unless there is widespread testing or vaccine for drivers and children.

- School systems should be prepared to provide all bus drivers protection equipment that should include masks, gloves, hand sanitizer, a forehead thermometer, and wipes.

- School systems will need to develop policies that may include taking a temperature check before allowing a child on the bus, all children must wear a mask while on the bus, seats being marked off with tape to avoid children sitting too close to each other, etc.

- Routers may need additional time to assign/reassign buses if social distancing requires districts to use more buses due to transporting fewer students per bus.

- Having different grades attend different days may cause issues with overcrowding on some buses and fewer students on others.

- Systems should be prepared for an increased number of parents transporting their own children to and from school due to health concerns and/or parents being out of work or unemployed.

    - This additional influx of cars may cause long delays in student arrival and departure if school grounds are not designed to handle a large number of car riders.

- The transportation of special needs students may be a concern because some students will have issues with spitting, screaming, biting or other behaviors that may spread COVID-19.

    - Transporting of special needs students will be important to ensure no Office of Civil Rights violations with IDEA (IEP and 504 students).

- Pre and post-trip inspections will now have to include the cleaning of high use areas of the bus, steering wheel, handles, seat backs, etc.

- School systems will have to be prepared to enact contact tracing if a child tested positive for COVID-19 who rides to or from school on a school bus.

- Transportation issues will continually change based on the evolving nature of the pandemic.

- A protective plastic barrier can (may) be installed behind the driver and/or alongside (if allowed by the MVA) (See examples below).
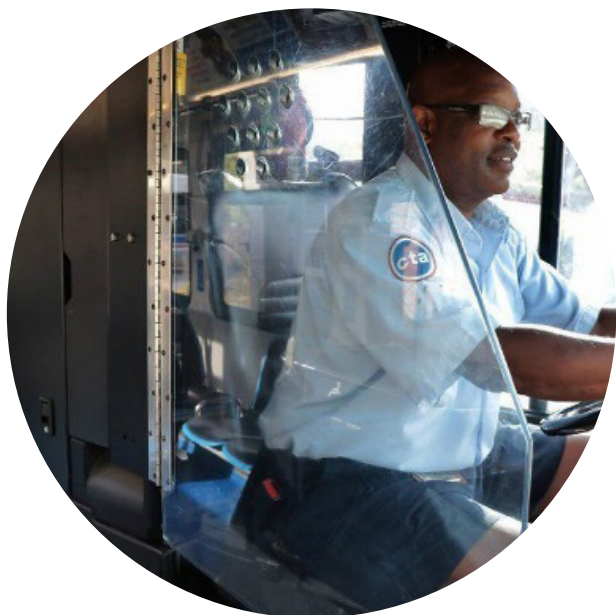
ROADMAP FOR RETURN TO INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETICS

Annually over 111,000 student-athletes participate in interscholastic athletic competitions administered by the Maryland Public Secondary Schools Athletic Association (MPSSAA) with an additional 6,500 in corollary sports and over 10,000 additional participants in other extracurricular activities and middle school athletic programs. Education-based athletics distinguishes itself from youth sports as an extension of the classroom that supports the educational mission of our local school systems (LSS). Research on student participation in interscholastic athletics and activities shows the undeniable enhancement they bring to the academic mission of schools as an inherent educational extension to the classroom that keeps students more engaged in academics which in turn fosters post-graduate success. Research has also shown that interscholastic athletics and activities promote the health and well-being of students mentally, emotionally, and physically creating positive psychological and academic outcomes. With a focus on students' mental health and social and emotional well-being, research has shown the benefits of exercise, social interaction, and sense of belonging - all components of interscholastic athletics participation. Additionally, coaches play an integral role in mentoring students' social and emotional growth and development.

The MPSSAA believes it is crucial not only to the physical, emotional, and mental well-being of our high school students across the state to return to physical activity and athletic competition but for attaining a high level of academic engagement as well.

The phased in reopening of interscholastic athletics should follow MPSSAA guidelines and mirror LSS instructional and logistical decisions by allowing for an incremental return of participation, using factual data and aligning with state and local recommendations and restrictions.

Maximizing Participation Opportunities

The MPSSAA recognizes that it is likely that ALL students will not be able to return to – and sustain – athletic activity at the same time in all schools, regions, counties, and cities. There will also likely be variation in what sports and activities are allowed to

be played and held based on local protocols and procedures. The MPSSAA would typically have reservations regarding such inequities, however, the MPSSAA endorses the idea of returning students to school-based athletics and activities in any and all situations where it can be done safely for all concerned.

Roadmap Forward

The MPSSAA, in alignment with MSDE's Maryland Together: Maryland's Recovery Plan for Education, envisions that interscholastic athletics will be reimagined as each LSS determines the needs for their locale. In order to successfully administer a safe, education-based athletics program during the current COVID-19 pandemic, the MPSSAA recognizes that there will be varying degrees of participation across sports and geographic areas of the state. There are three possible states of athletic activities, based on the guidance of MPSSAA, each LSS, and local health departments. These states incorporate instructional decisions, social distancing requirements, size of gatherings, transportation, and many other factors that would be deemed locally necessary to administer interscholastic athletic activities. The three stages are as follows:

Cancellation of All Activities

Cancellation of all athletics and activities may take place in various geographic areas or statewide at any given time based on local and state health and safety decisions. LSSs should be prepared for interruptions to athletic schedules and operations during the course of a season.

Modified and Gradual Resumption and Administration of Athletics and Activities

Modified and gradual resumption and administration of athletics and activities are aligned with the Maryland Strong: Roadmap to Recovery phases one and two and with the instructional options found within Maryland Together: Maryland's Recovery Plan for Education. The MPSSAA envisions local school systems to operate within the modified and gradual resumption until reaching phase three of the Governor's recovery efforts.

Within phase one and two of the Governor's recovery plan there will be staged approaches for gradual resumption and administration of athletics and activities. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention describes the staged approach through a risk assessment.

- Lowest Risk: Performing skill-building drills or conditioning at home, alone or with family members.

- Increasing Risk: Team-based practice.

- More Risk: Within-team competition.

- Even More Risk: Full competition between teams from the same local geographic area.

- Highest Risk: Full competition between teams from different geographic areas.

The health and safety of student-athletes, coaches, athletic administrators, event staff, spectators, and officials is of paramount importance to the MPSSAA. Guidance in conjunction with medical experts and athletic administrators will be developed to fully implement the staged approach. Schools must be mindful that different sports could be operating at different risk assessment levels. Each sport carries its own risk based on the ability of social distancing to be maintained, indoor versus outdoor participation, duration of contact, face-to-face contact, and shared equipment.

Full Resumption and Administration of Activities

Full resumption and administration of athletics and activities coincides with the Governor's phase three, which includes the resumption of large scale events and LSSs engaging students at full capacity and functionality. The MPSSAA will issue additional detailed guidance periodically, as deemed necessary by the state's movement toward phase three and schools operating under a new modified sense of normalcy.

The MPSSAA is in the process of formalizing guidelines and resources for the return of interscholastic athletics and activities with all 24 LSSs and various stakeholders, including sports medicine and pediatric infectious disease professionals from The University of Maryland Medical System, Johns Hopkins Hospital, Medstar Health, and Lifebridge Health.

The MPSSAA formal guidance will be fluid and updated periodically using factual data and aligning with state and local recommendations and restrictions as they evolve to mirror LSS instructional and logistical decisions. The MPSSAA will continue to work with state and local health organizations, along with LSS leaders and stakeholders, to safely return interscholastic athletics to our schools and communities.

CHILDREN AND YOUTH WITH UNDERLYING CONDITIONS IN SCHOOLS

Nearly one out of every five children in the United States has a special healthcare need. Their care is often complex and warrants extra vigilance and care on the part of school health staff. Technical assistance, training, case-by-case consultation, and referrals to community and health resources provide school staff the information and skill training they might need. The school health specialist provides health care services for students with underlying conditions through monitoring and triaging and oversees the health care plans for these vulnerable children.

In order to maintain a safe school environment as students re-enter their school buildings, the school health specialist will want to consider providing training and technical assistance for school staff. Training may include large group health education and one-on-one consultation for staff related to the special health care needs of students with pre-existing conditions. All health guidelines for management of COVID-19 should be reinforced, including handwashing techniques, proper respiratory etiquette, use of hand sanitizer, temperature monitoring, social distancing, daily cleaning of the building and routine cleaning of high touch surfaces, the of use masks, and other emerging guidelines in order to protect vulnerable students. The CDC has published a valuable resources entitled **Considerations for Schools.**

The school health specialist, as part of the student services team will, as matter of course, consult and advise other team members such as school counselors, school social workers, pupil personnel workers and school psychologists in their work with children with underlying health care needs. The school health specialist may share health and medical expertise at team meetings to support educational goals at IEP, 504, and student service team meetings.

 In order to monitor the needs of vulnerable students, the school health specialist should review school organization and structure (physical and educational) to protect vulnerable students from situations that might compromise their health and discuss any concerns with school administrators. Reviewing the school emergency plan for the inclusion of strategies for individuals requiring special health care needs, including medications, specific equipment needs, and access to emergency care professionals as needed is also important as student return to school. The National Association of School Nurses provides multiple resources which may be very helpful entitled **Coronavirus Disease 2019 Resources.**

Parents of students with pre-existing conditions may have heightened fears about their child's return to school. The school health specialist will want to maintain contact with parents and doctors, consult with the student's health care provider, and consider the special needs of students with underlying conditions to determine options for virtual learning or home and hospital instruction. Family and medical staff may consider opportunities for school nurses to provide virtual care/telehealth visits, as necessary to students with underlying health conditions in need of skilled nursing care. **Considerations for School Nurses When Providing Virtual Care** includes thoughtful guidance for school nurses.

 Preparation of the health suite is especially important to safeguard the needs of all students, including students with underlying conditions. Working with parents to provide any additional protective gear that might be needed, extra medication, and information about their child's current condition, are all vital to the successful return of students to their schools. Adequate supplies such as automated soap and hand sanitizer dispensers/stations, sinks with hands-free faucets, paper towel or hand drying stations and no-touch trash receptacles in the nurse's office as well as in the school, will help prevent the spread of the virus. The immediate implementation of the student's health care plan should include providing health education to the student related to signs/symptoms

IX. Student Services

As schools reopen Student Services provide support in meeting the social/emotional needs of students, enrolling and transferring students, addressing health needs, assisting parents, communicating with outside agencies, etc. The services and strategies needed are described in the tables below to assist central office and school based personnel.

SCHOOL COUNSELORS

Role	Services	Strategies
Pre-planning for phased re-entry	Professional development	Create professional development for staff regarding typical childhood reactions to stress and trauma which might have resulted from home confinement • The MSDE, in collaboration with the Maryland School Counselor Association and higher education school counseling programs, is working with school counselors from across the State to create classroom guidance lessons (virtual and face-to face) for students at all grade levels on social-emotional needs, including trauma. • The MSDE has created a workgroup working on Maryland resources and materials designed to address the social emotional needs for students and staff. • School-based health centers with mental health supports will be available for students, as will the partnership programs that exist in many school systems. • School systems, with the support of the MSDE, are planning on implementing the use of Restorative Practices and Mindfulness strategies to address the social-emotional needs of students. The MSDE will be providing training in these practices in the summer 2020. Help student service staff create professional development for teachers and adult staff (remember bus drivers, cafeteria, and janitorial staff)
	Transitions – services that can be implemented spring and summer	Co-facilitate staff training related to re-entry concerns, e.g. trauma, grief, etc. Assist in the development of a re-entry protocol with the school leadership team and communicating the plan to students and families. Secure posters of each high school senior near school or on student's front yard Create virtual celebrations for seniors (Awards ceremonies, graduations, reflection of high school ceremonies produced by school staff for seniors, college and career days, school spirit days) Consider drive-by awarding of diplomas; Utilize social media to celebrate maintaining privacy of students Provide same ideas for middle school students transitioning to high school and consider some sort of ceremony for elementary school children transitioning to middle school. Hold virtual transition meetings between school counselors at sending and receiving schools. Work with special education to participate or to hold additional meetings.

		Share transitioning materials with elementary to middle school students and middle to high school students. Provide virtual school tours of receiving schools, if possible. Collaborate with receiving school counselors to have them present to transitioning school students. For example, have high school counselors and staff hold a virtual welcome to 9th grade. Create classroom guidance lessons on transitioning to a new level. In person, if possible, (e.g., students practice opening locks on lockers) Coordinate a parent night for parents of students who are transitioning to new school level (elementary to middle and middle to high). Include current parents of students who transitioned in the previous year. Prepare to offer real tours and meetings for transitioning students when it is safe to do so.
Mental health support	Classroom guidance, individual counseling, group counseling, referrals, student support team referrals, community referrals	Consult with classroom teachers about student needs and develop classroom guidance lessons as appropriate to the age and grade level Teach, or co-teach social emotional learning strategies to help students adjust to the changes in their environments Assist teachers with celebrating individual student resilience (What I did during the virus to be safe) Analyze student work to assess mental health needs (Journals, art work, etc.) Develop classroom guidance lessons on gratefulness: post student work in hallways thanking the cleaning staff, the nurses, doctors, grocery workers, etc. Assist teachers or create classroom guidance lessons on how to help others at a safe distance. Encourage virtual hellos and stories to seniors in nursing homes, etc. Provide individual counseling to students who express fears, loss, anxiety and/or signs of depression Refer students to outside counseling as needed Provide safe, social distancing for group counseling Co-teach lesson (health) on depression symptoms and warning signs and offer referral services to students and staff Observe and talk to students who may have signs of abuse or neglect. Use referral processes to secure help for the student and family Plan with administrators for sudden closing of schools due to resurgence of the virus. • How to reach homeless students, student without internet services, etc. • How to stock up on needed supplies should the virus return • Communication strategies for parents, students, staff and teachers

		Collaborate with student support staff and administrators for emergency planning should the virus return and schools need to close again. • Continuation of learning, disinfecting schools, mental health concerns of repeated stress of isolation, return, and re-isolation. Check in with staff to determine their mental health needs and work with Employee Assistance as needed. Provide professional development for staff on issues related to the possible return of the virus and stress management. Provide staff development with a focus on how teachers should talk to students (age appropriate) about the possibility of a return to home isolation.
	Developmental classroom support	Provide classroom lessons on school expectations and structure to help students re-adjust to a full school schedule Facilitate classroom guidance on social distance practices in school, community, home, etc. Assist teachers with behavioral concerns and counsel students to determine root causes.
Academic and school success Career and College	Scheduling, grades, new entrants, and transfers	Assist with the development and implementation of adjusted schedules. Adjust class sizes in the Student Information System (SIS) if necessary. Plan for the completion of course requests and scheduling for next school year (secondary school) Assist teachers with finalizing grades and providing updates to students and families Assist administrative assistants with transcript requests to help break backlog. Consult with PPWs about students who may have moved or who are not showing up. Assist registrar (high school) or secretaries (elementary) in the enrollment of students transferring from other schools or states. Prepare for an increased number of enrollments Provide updated college and career advisement in coordination with Institutes of Higher Education (IHEs), e.g., admissions, financial aid apprenticeships, and scholarships (secondary)

Consultation/ Coordination	Parent and community outreach	Welcome and reassure parents when they drop students off in the morning. Have staff create posters thanking parents for filling in for teachers.
		Create materials for parents regarding their fears and how to deal with those fears. Share materials with parents on how to talk to their children about managing change and about managing feelings during times of stress.
		Coordinate services with other related service providers, in the school and community to identify and address other student and adult needs.
		Provide socially distant parental information evenings regarding what the school is doing to keep students safe. Include other student services staff as presenters.
		Work with administration to develop communication strategies for outreach to all parents and students. Invite parent to provide input and ideas.

SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS

Role	Services	Strategies
Providing support to schools Pre-entry	Supporting school staff	Participate with student support and administrative staff in developing re-entry protocols and procedures for students. Consult with administration and student services teams to provide professional development on student and staff reactions to stress and imposed isolation/change.

	Mental Health	Co-lead classroom lessons on social emotional learning strategies.
		Consult with teachers as students return to identify classroom interventions for individual students as appropriate.
		Provide information to teachers about signs of depression, lack of motivation, and disengagement, so they can identify students who need support.
		Consult with teachers and administration on school-wide behavioral needs of students and work with the student support team to provide supports.
		Collaborate with school counselors and school social workers to provide lessons for students regarding managing change and managing anxiety.
		Consult with student services staff on plans to address the possibility of another outbreak and how to emotionally prepare students and staff.
		Provide supportive counseling and consultation for teachers who are struggling with issues related to the virus and confinement. Refer staff to community and system agencies.
		Visit classrooms to observe adult behaviors looking for signs of stress and anxiety. Discuss concerns with administration and refer as needed.
		Assist as a member of traumatic loss team to identify students who have lost a close family member or relative to COVID-19 while they were not in school. Triage for supportive services as needed.
		Provide threat assessments as needed to students who present as a danger to self or others.
		Meet with parents to discuss student needs and provide information to parents on how to talk to their children about corona virus.
Special education supports	Assessments	Meet with students to complete assessments. Work with Central Office staff to accommodate the back-log of needed assessments (e.g., double up psychological service providers to schools with students who need assessments).
		Check in with emotionally vulnerable students as they return to school to assess their level of functioning.
		Meet with parents to discuss student needs and secure permission for assessments.
		Consult with IEP teams and 504 teams to adapt student plans to meet emerging student needs.
Counseling/ therapy	Individual supports	Consult with teachers, school counselors, parents, and school social workers to deliver services to students who display outward signs of trauma.
		Refer students to outside agencies as needed.
		Provide age appropriate information and support to students related to student anxiety, fears, and loss.

SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKERS

Role	Services	Strategies
School support re-entry	Consultation, collaboration	Work with administration and student support staff to develop re-entry procedures for students.
		Collaborate to create professional development activities for faculty and student re-entry with a focus on mental health needs.
		Collaborate with school counselors on classroom guidance activities related to what students did during the confinement period. Assess student work for signs of abuse, neglect, or depression.
Family support	Home visits, consultation, referral, and counseling	Visit families who need information and support regarding health, food, shelter, Medicaid and other community services
		Prepare safety and other corona virus information for parents. Include what the school is doing to keep student safe.
		Refer families to community agencies for resources.
		Consult with school counselors and teachers regarding students who report a lack of food or shelter.
		Observe students in eating areas to see who has food and who does not.
		Consult with school nurse regarding students without medical coverage. and refer to Medicaid programs.
		Counsel families (observing social distancing to address family relationships that may have been strained by confinement).
		Provide therapeutic interventions for students who need service for depression, anxiety, fear, and loss.
		Provide services required on IEPs as student return to schools.
		Assess students for signs of abuse or neglect. Meet with students as needed around these issues.
		Check-in with students with known anxiety and fear concerns. Provide counseling as needed.
		Observe staff for signs of stress and anxiety. Refer as needed. Involve Employee Assistance.
		Provide information to parents on home visits (protective gear) regarding school attendance and child discipline techniques.

School support	Classroom lessons/ before and after school duties.	Work with student support staff to create an emergency plan related to the possible return of the virus and/or possible school re-closure. Focus on social emotional needs of faculty and staff as well as students.
		Co-lead with teaching staff on social emotional learning skills.
		Assist teachers with classroom lessons on scheduling and managing change.
		Consult with school counselors regarding character education and mindfulness strategies for the classroom.
		Observe students to help identify interventions that match student needs. Watch for signs of depression, lack of motivation, or disengagement.
		Assist at school drop offs and pick-ups to observe students as they return to their families.
		Consult with student service and IEP teams to identify students in need of supportive therapy/counseling and provide the service.

PUPIL PERSONNEL WORKERS, FOSTER CARE, AND HOMELESS LIAISONS

Role	Services	Strategies
Following up on no-shows when students return	Transportation to school	Arrange transportation to and from school for student in need of transportation.
		Make home visits with protective gear to determine why the student is not coming to school.
		Address parent fears about letting their children go back to school. Create materials to share with parents. Share precautions taken in all schools.
Providing support to schools	Supporting school staff	Assist in schools when possible.
		Help in hallways reminding students to stay a safe distance apart.
		Meet families at the front door of schools to share resources and help observe student and family interactions.
		Provide follow up discussions with students who are known to have family issues.
Providing community resources	Assisting students and families with mental health services	Coordinate services with Child Welfare Agencies (CWA) as appropriate
		Meet with student individually to assess needs. Consult with student service team to address needs.

	Provide links to community services	Deliver resources (safety measures in place) such as food as needed to families who are homebound.
		Make calls/home visits to families in need of services due to virus.
	Presence in school to observe students as they participate in classroom activities and in the hallways and cafeteria.	Assist school personnel in observing students who might be exhibiting possible signs of trauma.
		Contact community resources to request that they reach out to families.
		Identify students who are newly homeless and connect them to resources.
	Communication with Child Welfare liaisons for children who are homeless/foster care.	Provide and facilitate fast registration in new schools.
		Provide fliers with information about community to home.
Develop plan(s) providing assistance to schools with student enrollment.	Assist families with new guardianship orders due to virus	Reentry of students who resettled with another relative/fictive kin due to virus. Fictive Kin is a non-relative with court appointment as guardian for the child. **Md. Code, Family Law § 5-534**
		Assist with enrollment and documentation of family member or court order for fictive kin.
		Assist military families with orders of transfer.
Through phone calls and home visits assist families for entrance back to school.	Outreach to families that have not responded to school outreach.	Provide assistance for schools on enrollment for new/transferring students.
		Provide assistance for schools with pre-K and Kindergarten enrollment.
	Verifying residence(s)	
As a Foster Care/ Homeless Liaison, PPW will provide services needed for reentry. Will assist the school liaisons as warranted.	Foster Care and homeless students services	Assist homeless and foster care liaisons in the support of these students, who may have increased concern with school entrance.
		Assist CWAs address extra needs the students may have with peer and teacher separation.
Communication with CWAs and school system liaisons in addressing special needs might arise.		Child Welfare and Attendance (CWA).
Resource and Consultation	All students and school staff	Consult with student service teams regarding student needs.
		Consult with administrators and teachers to address needs of students and community.
		Connect community service providers and schools.

SCHOOL HEALTH SERVICES

Role	Services	Strategies
Provide leadership and guidance for local school health services programs during pandemic	Health Education: Students and Staff	Provide basic information about COVID-19, include age appropriate information for students/staff. Delivery of good hygiene practices includes: • Determine how information will be delivered to students and school staff. • Provide general strategies via video format prior to school re-entry. • Continue health education on good hygiene once school is in session. Topics for Good Hygiene Practices include: • Handwashing • Covering coughs and sneezes • Staying home when ill • Temperature monitoring, • Taking temperature at home; and fever (what number is considered as fever?) • The state health agency will provide guidance on the number considered as fever. Educate school community about infection control strategies: • Wearing masks when in public • Social distancing • Recognizing signs and symptoms of COVID-19 illness or notifying school if family members are ill • Guidance on what to do if the family unit has been tested and diagnosed with COVID-19 Additional staff education may include: • Awareness of school emergency response plans related to pandemic situations • Continuous awareness of signs and symptoms of COVID-19 • Use of PPE – gloves, masks, and face shields • Temperatures and definition of fever • Proper handwashing techniques • Environmental cleaning of school building – health suite, classrooms, etc. Be aware of increased anxiety during this time of COVID-19 as the school staff, students, and parents/guardians. Promote continuous communication between the school, student, and family as a sign of unity and togetherness.

		Promote continuous communication between the school, student, and family as a sign of unity and togetherness. Encourage and challenge practice of good hygiene with school staff and students. Model good hygiene practices and use available resources from the state/local health agencies; federal health agencies (CDC) where possible.
	Health Office: Ventilation and Set-Up of Physical Space (includes areas for separating/ isolating well and sick students)	Proper ventilation is necessary in the school health suite/office. Adequate air flow is necessary to maintain a healthy environment within the school building and in the school health office: • Check for windows opening and access to fresh air • Can health office be temporarily relocated for better ventilation/ adequate air exchange? • Use of fans/circulating fans for adequate air exchange. • Is there an available isolation area within the current health suite? – If not, planning for this needs to be considered Use a separate isolation area for effective infection control management and the reduction of widespread infections related to COVID-19. Separate students and staff exhibiting signs and symptoms of infection from healthy students and staff.
	Health Office: Management of ill students within the health office	School nurse and other health services staff to wear PPE (mask/face shield) when working with students. Health office needs to allow for separate space to treatment and student care (isolation area needed for sick students with fever). Have adequate supplies available for school nurse and other school health services staff working with the nurse. Have a first aid and medication station outside the health office for students who are well and use the health room space for ill students. *Note: Health room space may present a challenge for older school buildings. Accommodations must be made to for infection control measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and other diseases.
	Health Office: Medication Orders a) routine medication prescribed for students during the school day b) Standing orders for management of ill students in the school during the school day, and	Check on supply of daily medications and prescriptions for use and follow authorized prescriber orders. Establish a procedure for students who receive daily medications during the school day. Develop a flowchart regarding when to isolate and send home. This will assist other school health services staff (LPNs, CNAs, CMT) to help the flow of the health suite to be as effective and efficient as possible. Require students to present a doctor's note for return to school. Follow procedures for students/staff who may arrive to school with illness and send home as soon as possible to avoid spread of infection.

	c) Standing orders for the management of students returning to school after illness	Follow existing procedures for students/staff returning after illness, must be fever free for the defined period of time within the current school health guidelines.
	Types of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)	Health Suite supplies include: gloves, face Masks, face shields, and protective gowns, bonnets, and shoe protectors (booties). Materials should be inventoried and may need to be restocked if not on site. Determine how these materials can be accessed.
	Strategies to manage and reduce Mental Health/Anxiety	Work with school counselor and school psychologists on strategies to reduce mental health and anxiety related to COVID-19. Be sure to acknowledge the situation, acknowledge and validate the emotions, and provide a coping toolbox for calming strategies.
	Health Office: Disinfecting Strategies	Work with building maintenance and principal regarding the use of appropriate disinfectants. Thorough cleaning of all surfaces in the health room must be done daily by custodial staff. Continue to promote handwashing techniques. Clean surfaces regularly. Also continue to practice social distancing to the extent possible in the school setting.
	School Building: Monitoring Illness and Management Strategies	Practice social distancing. Monitor absenteeism. Consider re-entry in phases with continuation of distance learning. Stagger school start times if appropriate. If implemented, the school nurse should be aware if this may affect medication administration during the school day. Continue with regular disinfecting/cleaning of school areas.
	Monitoring and Triaging At-Risk and Vulnerable Student and Staff Population	Refer to medical provider to determine school entry for individuals with special health concerns, including individuals who are immunocompromised and have a weak immune system.

| Potential use of School Nurses in local counties

Will receive training to assist with COVID-19 testing, contact tracing process, and assisting in local call centers at the local health departments and/or hospitals.

Assist in clinical supervision of local call centers, including providing clinical guidance and appropriate health education | Health Services and School Nursing staff | Assist with COVID-19 testing and Contact Tracing education,

• School nurses will receive training from local health department staff for performing COVID-19 testing and other techniques for effective infections control (e.g. teaching donning and doffing)

    • Upon successful training for COVID-19 testing and test kits, school nurses will participate in local health department clinics to test individuals with signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and/or suspected exposure to COVID-19

    • Collect specimens at drive up and walk up testing sites

    • Assist at local child sheltering centers

    • Assist with local acute communicable disease programs for testing

• School nurses will receive training from local health department staff about contact tracing to prevent the spread of COVID-19 within the community

• Assist with local acute communicable disease programs for contact tracing

• Provide contact tracing that recognizes increased anxiety during COVID-19 related to testing of individuals with suspected infection and increased spread of infection due to possible exposure to individuals with suspected COVID-19 infection

• Teach and promote self-quarantine and social isolation from others if suspected exposure to COVID-19 or receipt of positive testing results for COVID-19

• Encourage the continued practice of social distancing and proper hand hygiene, and other healthy hygiene practices if there is suspected exposure to COVID -19 to avoid the spread of infection.

• Contact tracing training includes the following:

    • Seeking health education training of school nurses to provide support for individuals with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 infection.

    • Reaching out to exposed individuals and individuals who have a confirmed positive test for COVID-19

    • Providing information to contacts to understand the risks associated with COVID-19 infection

    • Stressing the importance of social distancing and self-quarantine/isolation from others to prevent spread of infection

    • Stressing that individuals must understand the signs and symptoms of COVID-19, especially coughing and shortness of breath, and continued monitoring for illness or change in one's health status. – Must seek prompt medical evaluation for infection and immediate medical care is symptoms emerge and become worse.

    • Teach individuals about the purpose of contact tracing and encourage to stay home, maintain social distancing at least six feet apart from others until 14 days after exposure. |

SCHOOL BASED HEALTH CENTERS

Role	Services	Strategies
Provide leadership, guidance, and support for local school-based health center (SBHC) programs during and after the COVID-19 pandemic	Provision for available health care services to students, parents/ guardians, and staff enrolled in the local SBHC Program	Traditional SBHC programs may provide continuity of care to students and families during COVID-19, including ongoing health education and health care services during the re-entry to schools. Services provided by traditional SBHC programs may include: · Somatic health care, · Mental Health/Behavioral Health, · Urgent care services, · Dental services, and · Eye care services if available. Promote effective communication between the school, student, and family as a sign of unity and togetherness. Promote health education for the student/family health care needs including: · General prevention education, · Proper hand washing techniques, and · Promote good hygiene Provide SBHC services information and enrollment packets to students and families. Effective collaboration and communication between SBHC programs and local primary care providers enhances continuity of care for students and families in the school setting.
	SBHC using Telehealth Services	Use of telehealth to address student health care needs during the school day may include the following: · Participation of parents/guardians in the telehealth visit via a remote access invite from the telehealth originating site. · Telehealth visits provide immediate access to care including the recommended health services and prescribed treatment for students during the school day. Note: The availability of telehealth services in schools promotes continuity of care for students with the expectation of the students' return to the classroom setting as recommended by the telehealth provider. Facilitate effective collaboration and communication with local primary care providers and local pediatricians regarding available school-based telehealth services.

X. Continuity of Learning

Each school system has developed a Continuity of Learning Plan to share with staff, students, and community members. These plans inform the public of how distance or remote learning will be provided in their school systems. All local school systems have information posted on their websites. This often includes a message from the superintendent, information regarding meals, and information about distribution of technology or packets of learning content. At least half of the school systems have their Continuity of Learning Plan on their website in a place that is easily accessible to parents and the community.

All plans contain a description of the following:

- An overall description of how continuity of learning will be delivered to all students. This includes their distance learning platform, the technology they have available, and how they accommodate students who do not have access to a device or the internet.

- A description of the roles and responsibilities of district staff, school administrators, teachers, instructional assistants, students and parents.

- A sample teacher's day and student's day is included for elementary, middle and high school students.

- A plan of accountability that identifies how they monitor and assess student performance. This includes how they grade students for the 3rd and 4th quarter.

- A description of how the school system plans to address equity. Included is how they address special education, English Learners, Students with Academic Needs, Homeless Students and Gifted Students.

- A section that identifies the professional development plan for staff.

- A description of the resources available for students is included.

These plans will continue to be an Important component of any school system's Recovery Plan as we need to address social distancing which will result in a modified schedule for students' return to school.

We know from research that face-to-face time with teachers is the most effective means of teaching and learning, however, remote learning will likely remain a component of the instructional program for some time to come. As noted above, each school system's process for remote learning is reflected in their Continuity of Learning Plan and can be found on the MSDE website or on the individual system's website.

XI. Alignment with the Governor's Roadmap for Recovery

In order to ensure that any phased approach to the reopening of school buildings for any students or staff is in accordance with the Governor's Roadmap to Recovery, every potential in-person action listed below is identified within one of the stages of recovery from the Governor's recovery plan. It should be noted, however, that different actions could be a part of the various sub-phases within the three stages addressed in the Governor's plan. Future sub-phases have not yet been identified and could include more specific capacity restrictions that would impact several options school systems have available. All activities must remain in accordance with State and local social distancing and safety requirements.

INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS AND ADJUSTED RETURN: SCHOOL OPTIONS

- Full Return of Students to In-Person Instruction (Stage 3)

- Opening of School Buildings to Small Groups of Staff and Students (Beginning of Stage 2)

- One-Day Rotation (Stage 2)

- Two-Day Rotation (Stage 2)
  Note: Depending on the size and capacity of the school, this option may be within a sub-phase of the Governor's plan due to an uncertain increase in the cap on social gatherings.

- A/B Week (Stage 2)
  Note: Depending on the size and capacity of the school, this option may be within a sub-phase of the Governor's plan due to an uncertain increase in the cap on social gatherings.

- Elementary Face-to-Face and Secondary Distance Learning (Stage 2)

- Grade Band Phase-In (Stage 3)

CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION (CTE)

- Disinfect CTE equipment and workspace (Beginning of Stage 2, prior to any return of students and staff)

- Assess Status of CTE inventory (Stage 2)

- Modify Work-based learning experiences (Stage 1 and Stage 2)
  Note: Students in work-based learning programs that are established within businesses and industries that have re-opened as a result of the Governor's Executive Orders in Stage 1 could participate in those programs as long as appropriate social distancing measures are taken by the organization where the experience will take place.

- Transport students to career centers, worksites, and community colleges (Estimated Earliest: Stage 2)
  Note: Implementation of the transportation of students to different worksites, community college campuses, and career centers is contingent on the operating status of each of these locations.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

- In-person return of small groups of students for various services (Stage 2)
  Note: Provision of any in-school, in-person services is contingent upon the re-opening of school buildings deemed appropriate by the State Superintendent and each local school system superintendent.

PROGRAMS TO REINFORCE LEARNING

- Any programming designed to take place within school buildings is contingent upon the re-opening of school buildings when deemed appropriate by the State Superintendent and each local school system superintendent. Any programming designed to be provided virtually may begin at any time at the discretion of the local school system.

- Summer Programs (Stage 2)

- Enrichment Classes for Middle and High School (Stage 2)

- Middle School Assistance for Special Needs and At-Risk Students (Stage 2)

- Saturday School (Stage 2)

- Increase Dual Enrollment (Stage 2)
  Note: This action is contingent on the operational status of local colleges and universities.

- Modified Calendars (Various Stages)
  Note: All modifications to school calendars that would extend or establish additional in-person instructional time must be consistent with the current restrictions and social distancing measures in place at the State and local level at that time.

- Maryland Out of School Time Programs (OST) (Stage 2)
  Note: All of the recommendations to continue implementation of these in-person programs would not be able to commence until stage 2 of the Governor's plan.

STUDENT SERVICES

- Any in-person support services would not begin until phase 2 of the Governor's recovery plan or until school buildings have been re-opened for the return of students and staff, including but not limited to: mental health services, academic and school success, individual counseling, family support, parent/community outreach, etc.

Appendix A: COVID-19 Checklist

The following checklist is designed to be a simple, yet useful tool in prioritizing system and school needs as school systems plan for the reopening of schools. A checklist can assist in organizing personnel, resources, and stake holders and determining student, faculty, and community needs.

- ☐ Establish a crisis team and outline steps that should occur to implement reopening plans. Decisions may include means of communicating with faculty and staff, communication with community members, communication with board members, updating social media, and social distancing considerations.

- ☐ Make a list of responsibilities and assign individuals to those tasks

- ☐ Determine what the most essential needs are and resolve those issues first.

- ☐ Determine resources on hand and resources that will be needed to successfully transition back to school.

- ☐ Determine professional development, as well as, processes and procedures that will be needed to address concerns created by the pandemic.

- ☐ Develop predetermined responses to questions and concerns that may be asked by community members.

- ☐ Communicate with your constituents and brainstorm effective means of reopening school with them.

- ☐ Explore and determine digital and social media platforms that can utilize to share information.

- ☐ Be prepared to communicate with the press realizing that everything that you share will be of the utmost importance.

- ☐ Maintain regular contact with leaders and policy-makers at the State and local levels.

- ☐ Remain open and receptive to ideas and suggestions.

- ☐ Take action when necessary and utilize the crisis team for reflection and determination of next steps.

Appendix B: School System Food and Nutrition Services

Role	Services	Strategies
Local School System Food and Nutrition Services Director: To determine capacity for production and service of student meals	**School Food and Nutrition Services:** Evaluation of school food service preparation facilities and structures available to continue operations of student meals programs, including factors for safe food handling, federal guidelines for student meals, food supply chain availability, staff safety, etc.	Assess current facilities and identify current capacity for volume of student meal service operations. Document fixed capacity factors such as cold holding equipment, dry food storage area, food preparation space, equipment for transportation of meals inside a school building (such as carts and racks), and equipment for transportation of food and meals between buildings (such as refrigerated trucks, hot and cold holding equipment, food storage bins, etc.). Address feasibility for food service model shift from traditional cafeteria line model to other potential models. Develop models for food service at the Local School System level. Procure additional equipment and supplies as needed.
State and Local Department of Health: To determine maximum number of people per room/gathering, and spacing/social distancing	**School Food and Nutrition Services**: Operations and logistics models to use for delivery and transportation of food for student meal service (e.g., meals in the classroom; spacing for student seating if meals served in school cafeteria)	Assess logistics and address needs for additional equipment, food safety protocols and staff training, modified packaging, sanitation, point of service reporting, and transportation of food from the food preparation site to classrooms. Utilize model for Breakfast in the Classroom to implement Lunch and/or other meals served in the classroom. Coordinate Food & Nutrition Service Operations with teachers and administrators to determine logistics packaging, transport, and food safety for student meals in the classroom.
Local School System Superintendent, Board of Education, School Administrators, and School Food and Nutrition Directors: To determine intersection of Continuity of Learning Plan and Student Meal Service	**School Food and Nutrition Services**: Which model to employ for student meal service to accommodate students on campus, in addition to students continuing with distance learning off campus.	Assess logistics and operation needs to address simultaneous operations for on- and off-site student meal delivery during school reopenings. Utilize model for grab and go student meals for consumption at home. Determine a model for continued student meals service for distance learners at the local level. Coordinate Food & Nutrition Services Operations to integrate continuity of student nutrition as a component of the continuity of learning plan.

Maryland State Department of Education Office of School and Community Nutrition Programs (MSDE OSCNP), and Local School System Food and Nutrition Services Director: To ensure program integrity and requirements for State and federally funded School Nutrition Programs	**School Food and Nutrition Services**: Which USDA Child Nutrition Program regulations and waivers apply to student meal service at the local level during the phased reopening process for schools.	Communicate and facilitate the appropriate Child Nutrition Program and applicable waivers for continuity of student meal service during various stages of distance learning and reopening of school campuses. Address logistics to ensure compliance with program requirements such as meal pattern, point of service for reimbursable meals, food safety, etc. Utilize USDA Foods entitlement dollars for school nutrition programs. Provide technical assistance and support during implementation of recovery and reopening of school nutrition programs at the local level.
Local Department of Health, Local Food and Nutrition Services Director, Local School Administrators and School Nurses: To determine health and safety factors related to Student Nutrition Programs	**School Food and Nutrition Services:** What new procedures are needed for enhanced sanitation measures, health and safety of School Nutrition Staff, and operations of Student Nutrition Programs during the phased reopening of schools.	Determine enhanced sanitation measures related to student meals service at the local level, including student handwashing on school campuses, appropriate sanitation measures for touch-contact surfaces used by students during meal service in schools (such as point of service touch pads, tables and chairs, carts used in transportation, etc.). Determine health and safety measures at the local level for School Nutrition Staff, such as daily temperature check and a schedule for virus testing, protocols for isolation and containment for prevention of virus outbreak, access to and maintenance of PPE, etc. Document appropriate standard operating procedures and train staff on new protocols.
Maryland State Department of Education - Office of School and Community Nutrition Programs (MSDE OSCNP), Office of Child Care (MSDE OCC), Local Maryland Health Departments, Child Care Center Sponsors and Directors: To ensure program integrity and safety in the operation of Child Nutrition Program and reopening of child care centers	Coordination with MSDE Office of Child Care and Local Maryland Health Departments to monitor inclusion and adherence to Covid-19 safety protocols in food service activities among child care providers. Coordination with sponsors and directors to ensure continuity of meal program requirements for child care centers participating in child nutrition programs.	Provide technical assistance and support during implementation of recovery and reopening Address logistics to ensure compliance with program requirements such as meal pattern, point of service for reimbursable meals, food safety, etc.

Appendix C: School and Community Nutrition Programs Annotated Resources

Topic	Summary	Link
USDA Covid-19 Waivers	A summary of waivers initiated to ease meal service regulations in response to pandemic Visit the home page of OSCNP for additional information **http://eatsmartmaryland.org/**	From MSDE - Office of School and Community Nutrition Programs (OSCNP) **http://www. marylandpublicschools. org/programs/**
Roadmap to Recovery: A Public Health Guide for Governors	States will...need to develop plans for a careful, staged reopening that protects the public's health while laying a strong foundation for long-term economic recovery. This report synthesizes and expands upon these expert recommendations by outlining ten key steps and related operational considerations for governors to guide critical decisions in support of the public's health and well-being in the weeks and months ahead.	From National Governors Association **https://www.nga.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/NGA-Report.pdf**
Maryland Strong: Roadmap to Recovery	The statewide plan for reopening and recovery includes "[p]artnering with local governments and school systems" to facilitate "a nuanced and gradual reopening process" for schools in Maryland.	From the Office of Governor Larry Hogan: **https://governor.maryland.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/MD_Strong.pdf**
What School Nutrition Professionals and Volunteers at Schools Need to Know about COVID-19	Provides guidance for safely operating meal service after reopening schools	From CDC https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/school-nutrition-professionals.html
Use of Cloth Face Coverings	The CDC continues to study the spread and effects of the novel coronavirus across the United States. We now know from recent studies that a significant portion of individuals with coronavirus lack symptoms ("asymptomatic") and that even those who eventually develop symptoms ("pre-symptomatic") can transmit the virus to others before showing symptoms....CDC recommends wearing cloth face coverings in public settings where other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain (e.g., grocery stores and pharmacies) especially in areas of significant community-based transmission.	From the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover.html From Johns Hopkins Medicine https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/conditions-and-diseases/coronavirus/coronavirus-face-masks-what-you-need-to-know

Use of Cloth Face Coverings in Child Care	When feasible, children age 5 years and older who can wear a cloth face covering safely and consistently should wear a cloth face covering while in the child care center or family child care home in accordance with CDC guidance... ... Be removed by the child for meals, snacks, naptime, outdoor play (when social distancing can be maintained) or when it needs to be replaced;	From Maryland Department of Health https://phpa.health.maryland.gov/Documents/MSDE_MDH_face_covering_iterim_guidance.pdf
Reopening Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfecting Public Spaces	Reducing the risk of exposure to COVID-19 by cleaning and disinfection is an important part of reopening public spaces that will require careful planning. Cleaning and disinfecting public spaces including your workplace, school, home, and business will require you to: • Develop your plan • Implement your plan • Maintain and revise your plan	From CDC https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/reopen-guidance.html
Guidelines for Reopening Schools: American Enterprise Institute	"A Blueprint for Back to School" is a comprehensive report released 5/4/20 that provides a framework for reopening schools that can help state policymakers, education and community leaders, and federal officials plan appropriately	From American Enterprise Institute https://www.aei.org/research-products/report/a-blueprint-for-back-to-school/
Guidelines for Reopening Schools: Montana Health Department	Eat meals in the classroom and other basic considerations and safety protocols (see pages 1-3)	**https://www.healthygallatin.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/MT-Reopening-Guidelines-for-Businesses-and-Schools.pdf**
Guidelines for Reopening Schools: Minnesota Department of Health	Social distancing guidelines including delivery of meals outside of cafeteria	**https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/schools/socialdistance.pdf**
Guidelines for Reopening Schools: WHO Guidance on Reopening Schools	Includes: • checklist for school administrators, teachers and staff • checklist for students and children	**https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/key-messages-and-actions-for-covid-19-prevention-and-control-in-schools-march-2020.pdf?sfvrsn=baf81d52_4**

Guidelines for Reopening Schools: CDC- Guidance for Child Care Programs that Remain Open	Recommends meals in classroom versus a cafeteria and other guidelines that can be applied to school settings	**https://www.cdc.gov/ coronavirus/2019-ncov/ community/schools-childcare/ guidance-for-childcare.html**
Guidelines for Reopening Schools: White House Phases for Reopening	Schools can begin in Phase Two	**https://www.whitehouse.gov/ openingamerica/#criteria**
Research related to USDA child nutrition programs	Economic Research Service (ERS) conducts research on USDA's child nutrition programs and their role in children's food security, diets, and well-being.	From USDA ERS https://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/ food-nutrition-assistance/child-nutrition-programs/

Appendix D: Health Considerations for Schools - Resuming Classes

(Prepared and shared by Wendy Donald, BSN RN NCSN Muscatine, Iowa April 2020)

Domain	Considerations/Strategies	Notes

Health Education:
 	
Students and Staff
	Basic information on COVID-19 (age appropriate. See Notes)
	
	Good Hygiene Practices: How is this information delivered to students/staff? Could these general strategies be delivered prior to the restart of school in video form? Replayed once school is in session?
	
	• Handwashing
	
	• Covering coughs and sneezes
	
	• Stay home when ill
	
	• Temperature
	
	    • Can temperature monitoring be done at home
	
	    • What number (or value) is considered a fever
	
	Also to be addressed (to reduce fear/anxiety as well)
	
	• Wearing masks when out in public
	
	• Social distancing
	
	• What to do if feeling sick or someone in the family unit is ill
	
	• What to do if someone in the family unit has been tested/diagnosed with COVID-19
	
	Staff Education: Train staff on the use of the Ill Student/Staff flowchart; use of PPE (including gloves, masks, face shields),taking temperatures and proper handwashing technique. Appropriate environmental cleaning (classroom or Health Office area) would also be beneficial.
		Remember that anxiety is increased when something is unknown and is perceived as harmful.
		
		Change the "threat" into a "challenge"....Reduces the anxiety. Challenge the students to practice good hygiene. Challenge them in selecting a credible news source (such as the CDC) to view daily on accurate updates of COVID-19 activity (age specific intervention)
		
		Promote communication between school, student and family. Recognize that families are stressed and that "we are in this together". "I am on your side".

Health Office: Ventilation and Physical Set-Up	Proper ventilation is needed for the School Health Office. This could be in the form of a window that could be opened or the use of fans to be able to circulate the air. Could the Health Office be temporarily relocated to an area that provides better ventilation if the current Health Office does not allow for adequate air exchange? Could the use of circulating fans be considered?	Students and school staff that are displaying symptoms of infection need to be separated from healthy students and staff that are utilizing the Health Office for daily medication, first aid treatment, physical injury assessment, etc. Ventilation is part of that strategy. Please see Health Office Management of Ill Persons within the office

| Health Office:

Management of ill persons within the office | School nurse to wear PPE (mask/face shield) when working with students

Health office needs to allow for two spaces for student care.

- One space of healthy students coming for routine needs, medication, diabetic checks, first aid/injury assessment, etc.

- Second space for students/staff who are ill and be evaluated for possible infection

- **Consider ventilation strategies for this set-up

Maintain social distancing between students/staff

- Teacher may need to notify the nurse if student needs to be sent to the Health Office to make sure office can provide social distancing

- Provide the classroom with basic first aid supplies to be able to handle some Health Office requests in class

- Consider the Nurse or Health Associate to do a visit outside the classroom area if Health Office is full

- Consider an online appointment process to visit the School Health Office. School Nurse would be able to manage the student flow to the Health Office | Consider temporarily relocating Health Office to a more ventilated location if possible

Consider having a first aid/medication station outside the Health Office to provide services to the "walking well"

Caution with aerosolized treatments: Wear mask and gloves during treatments; consider how the location of the treatment when working with a "healthy" versus "sick" child when receiving the treatment. VENTILATION |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Health Office:**

Medical standing orders for management of ill persons within school and returning to school after illness | Developing a flowchart that outlines "when to isolate and send home" will help the School Nurse team (Unlicensed Assistive Personnel) run efficiently and effectively

Utilize the Management of Infectious Disease Process:

- Identify the sick

- Use Infection protocol to decrease further transmission

- Refer for further care when indicated

Establish a procedure when students/staff arrive to school sick and send home as soon as possible

- May need to provide transportation to home if parent unable to come for them...identify school staff to help with this

  - School Resource Officer

  - School/Home Liaison (Resource Navigator)

- Establish a process for students/staff returning after illness (how many days being fever free without use of medication before be able to return to school)

  - Students/Staff to be sent home from school as soon as possible | Is a MD note needed for re-entry after out of school due to illness?

Receive medical standing orders from local provider(s)

At this time (4-2020) schools are not expected to screen students or staff to identify cases of COVID-19

What temperature to use? Is there a difference between CDC, WHO, State Public Health Guidance?

How to determine accuracy of temperature? If temp is questionable using a non-touch thermometer, do you test by another form...such as tympanic? |

	• Students/Staff with respiratory symptoms and fever over 100.4 (per NASN), it is recommended that a face mask is placed on that individual. The individual will be directed to an area within the Health Office designated for increased isolation to further reduce communicability • Returning to school after illness; has the 24 hour fever free without use of fever reducing medication to be extended to 72 hours	
PPE	Health Office supplies: • Gloves • Face masks • Face Shield	Recommendation is for the Health Office to one complete set containing Face protector, bonnet, booties, gown
Mental Health/ Anxiety Reducing Strategies	**There is a false belief in dealing with Anxiety: Worry + Constant Vigilance = Safety. WRONG!** **We have little control over virus spread, but we can control our actions and reactions** Need to take CONTROL of your thought pattern. How do you do this? • Stay in contact with your medical and/or mental health providers • Adhere to your medication regimen • Keep an eye on your symptoms and report to your providers when advised • Practice Deep Breathing • Limit time on social media • Manage your information (check in daily with a trusted news source for daily updates) • Proper rest and nutrition • Maintain a consistent daily schedule/routine • Practice good hygiene strategies	*Acknowledge the situation *Acknowledge/validate the emotions Build a coping toolbox that includes body and mind calming strategies Realize that the resources may not be there to provide a care provider to the home…may have to capitalize on the family's strength. A chaotic family runs on negative emotions and tends to look "on the outside" for help. Help parents be kind to their children We are all in this together/Choose kindness Young children book recommendations: Grumpy Monkey: Okay to be sad or have unexplained feelings
	Refer to Resource Navigator for student/family services if identified (Remember, services may be limited during this time) **REMEMBER: Adult anxiety causes child anxiety; Our demeanor is crucial in keeping anxiety manageable**	We're Going on a Bear Hunt: Can't go over or under it; have to go through it

Health Office: Disinfecting Strategies	Use of appropriate disinfectant that has a kill claim for COVID-19 (EPA has a list) Hand washing prior to and after each student interaction or use of alcohol hand sanitizer if soap/water wash is not available Durable medical surfaces, such as cots, to be cleaned between student use; Disposable paper (if used) disposed and replaced after each student use Commonly touched surfaces, such as counters, cleaned with appropriate disinfecting wipes or cleaners after student/staff interaction around that surface area	Thorough cleaning of all surfaces in the Health Area to be done by custodial staff daily **Soap and water best option over hand sanitizers.** **"Deep Cleaning" not necessary; Routine cleaning adequate for this virus**
School Building: Illness Monitoring and Management Strategies	Increase space among students during in-person instruction Partial closure (class/grade); Offer online/home instruction Reduce schedule (½ day?) Suspending use of common areas (halls, cafeteria, playground, library, gym, etc) within the school building OR Reducing the load on common areas through altered scheduling Segregating students within common areas (to reduce roaming) Create one-way traffic pattern in hallways (use of signage) Implement standard workplace social distancing measures for teacher and other staff Cancelling classes or activities that occur within the school day with a high rate of mixing/contact (PE, choir, Field trips) Cancel/Postpone after school activities ****Look at teachers that travel from one campus to another on the same day** If applicable, determine at what point a school would be closed for a set number of days due to illness...For example, when a building reaches 10% absence or greater due to illness, the building is closed for 2 days for cleaning.	Monitor and report absenteeism Staggering start times for school School-wide temperature monitoring upon arrival Use of PPE within the school Disinfecting Strategies for the classroom/common areas ½ day classes ½ student population in school at one time **Consider class or grade closure and suspension of common building areas for illness rather than a whole school closure. Per research, this has a smaller mitigation effect, but does lead to reduction of a large-scale outbreak.**
School Building and Bussing: Disinfecting Strategies	Clean the bus prior to and after each route; reduce number of students in the bus at one time to maintain some social distancing.	When social/physical distancing can not be achieved; consider PPE (wearing face masks) to reduce transmission

School Building and Bussing: Maintain Social Distancing	Stagger bus times to allow for cleaning between routes Reduce mixing during transport Use of PPE (masks) Reduce number of students on bus at one time Disinfection strategies; clean bus prior to and after transport. **Consider suspending bus services**	½ day classes ½ student population in school or on bus at one time Use of PPE while on bus
At Risk/Vulnerable Student and Staff Population	Refer students/staff that are considered "high risk" to their medical provider to determine when school re-entry for their individual health concern is recommended	Immunocompromised population
Students who are unable to wear PPE and/or can not maintain social distance while in the classroom setting		Symptomatic versus asymptomatic Potential for contact with an ill person or no contact …does this matter?

Appendix E: Recovery Resources

General

Maryland State Department of Education: **COVID-19 Resources for Maryland Schools** – this website contains all of the COVID – 19 resources and information posted by MSDE
http://marylandpublicschools.org/newsroom/Pages/COVID-19/index.aspx

The report proposes that leaders of education systems and organizations develop plans for the continuation of education through alternate modalities, during the period of necessary social isolation. It offers a framework of areas to be covered by such plans.
https://globaled.gse.harvard.edu/files/geii/files/framework_guide_v2.pdf

Council of Chief State School Officers on a Framework to assist with the restart of schools
https://ccsso.org/blog/ccsso-releases-framework-assist-state-education-leaders-planning-restart-schools

Information from the Education Commission of the States regarding actions of states across the country related to the pandemic.
https://www.ecs.org/covid-19-update/

Includes a plan prepared by the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) to safely open America's schools
https://www.aft.org/sites/default/files/covid19_reopen-america-schools.pdf

Minnesota Department of Health Guidance on Social Distancing in School Settings
https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/schools/socialdistance.pdf

Learning Acceleration Guide: Planning for Acceleration in the 2020-2021 School Year published by TNTP reimagine teaching
https://tntp.org/assets/set-resources/TNTP_Learning_Acceleration_Guide_Final.pdf

Reopening Schools in the Context of COVID-19: Health and Safety Guidelines From Other Countries (Learning Policy Institute Policy Brief
https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/sites/default/files/product-files/Reopening_Schools_COVID-19_BRIEF.pdf

CDC Resources
https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/communication/print-resources.html?Sort=Date%3A%3Adesc

Building Preparation and Services

CDC documents on cleaning/disinfecting public spaces buildings and preparing to open schools:

- **https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/reopen-guidance.html**

- **https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/pdf/ReOpening_America_Cleaning_Disinfection_Decision_Tool.pdf**

- **https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/reopen-guidance.html?deliveryName=USCDC_2067-DM26911**

Instructional/Academics

The United States Department of Education (USDE) has provided the following resources to help support states and local school systems support students with disabilities:

- **DOE Fact Sheet Addressing the Risk of COVID-19 in Schools While Protecting the Civil Rights of Students** (March 16, 2020)

- **Supplemental Fact Sheet: Addressing the Risk of COVID-19 in Preschool, Elementary, and Secondary Schools While Serving Children with Disabilities** (March 21, 2020)

- **Non-Regulatory Guidance on Flexibility and Waivers for Grantees and Program Participants Impacted by Federally Declared Disasters** (September 2018)

- **DOE OSERS: Dear Colleague Letter re: Virtual Schools** (August 5, 2016)

Division of Early Intervention and Special Education Services Technical Assistance Bulletins:

- **Serving Children with Disabilities under IDEA during School Closures due to the COVID-19 Pandemic**

- **Providing Continuity of Learning to Students with Disabilities through Nonpublic Schools during COVID-19**

- **Providing Continuity of Learning to Students with Disabilities during COVID-19**

- **Providing Continuity of Learning to Deaf, Hard-of-Hearing, Blind, Low-Vision, and DeafBlind Students during COVID-19**

- **Extended School Year (ESY) Services during the COVID-19 Pandemic**

- **Navigating Secondary Transition Services for Students with Disabilities during COVID-19**

- **Continuity of the IFSP for Young Children (Birth – Age 4) with Developmental Delays/Disabilities and their Families during Extended School/Agency Closure due to the COVID-19 Pandemic**

- **Providing Continuity of Learning for Students with Disabilities who require Extensive, Intensive, Individualized Instruction and Support during the COVID-19 Pandemic**

- **Supporting the use of Assistive Technology in a Virtual and/or Distance Learning Environment**

- **A Parents' Guide: Navigating Special Education during the COVID-19 Pandemic**

- **Supporting Students with Disabilities During COVID-19 and Afterwards: A Guide for Emotional Well-Being**

- **Maryland Infants and Toddlers Program: Recovery Efforts to Support a Continuum of IFSP Service Delivery during the COVID-19 Pandemic and Beyond**

Health, Wellness, Social, and Behavioral

Role of the School Nurse in Returning to School Planning
https://higherlogicdownload.s3.amazonaws.com/NASN/3870c72d-fff9-4ed7-833f-215de278d256/UploadedImages/PDFs/COVID-19_Interim_Guidance_Role_of_the_School_Nurse_in_Return_to_School_Planning.pdf

Considerations for Reopening Schools – key steps and elements to consider when opening schools
file:///C:/Users/mgable/Downloads/McKinsey%20COVID19%20response%20Reopening%20schools%20Webinar%20vF.PDF

Maryland Department of Health – MDH website for all health related information

https://health.maryland.gov/pages/home.aspx

Plan Ahead to Support the Transition-back of Students, Families, and Staff – addresses social emotional supports, identification of students who are not adjusting, transition during the early weeks, etc.
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/newsletter/spring20.pdf

Minnesota Department of Health Guidance on Social Distancing in School Settings – provides information on social distancing in the classroom, safe spaces for students, and staff, etc.
https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/schools/socialdistance.pdf

Division of Curriculum, Instructional Improvement and Professional Learning
http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/programs/Documents/ITSLM/ParentResources.pdf

(This resource provides information for parents to support students at home.)

http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/programs/Documents/ITSLM/TeacherResources.pdf

(This resource provides information to support teachers in developing their classroom lessons.)

Child Care

MSDE's information on childcare
https://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/

MSDE's Frequently Asked Questions on Child Care
https://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/covid-faqs

Interscholastic Athletics

The Maryland Public Secondary Schools Athletic Association
www.mpssaa.org

The National Federation of State High School Associations: The Case for For High School Activities.
https://www.nfhs.org/articles/the-case-for-high-school-activities/

The Aspen Institute Project Play: Benefits of Physical Activity
https://www.aspenprojectplay.org/youth-sports-facts/benefits

CDC documents on the return of sports:
https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/youth-sports.html

APPENDIX F: STAKEHOLDERS

Thank you to members of our stakeholder group. We value the collaboration and input provided.

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TEACHER – SOUTH SHORE ELEMENTARY - AACPS; 2020
MARYLAND TEACHER OF THE YEAR

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