

Frederick County Public Schools'
School Opening Plan
&
Continuity of Services
2023-2024



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Frederick County Public Schools' 2023-2024 School Opening Plan

Executive Summary

Frederick County Public Schools (FCPS) is a successful school system in a diverse and growing community. Frederick County bridges rural, suburban, and urban lifestyles near both the Washington, D.C. and Baltimore metropolitan communities. Currently, Frederick County is home to 38 elementary schools, 13 middle schools, 10 high schools, 4 public charter schools, an alternative school, a special education school, Frederick County Virtual School (FCVS), and a Career and Technology Center (CTC). FCPS is also home to a Remote Virtual Program at each level serving students in grades 3-12 and numerous specialized programs serving students with disabilities. FCPS is committed to providing personalized pathways for the success of all students.

Over 47,000 students were enrolled in FCPS in the 2022-23 school year. FCPS is the fastest growing school system in the state of Maryland, growing by 9.8% over the last 5 years. In 2023, official September 30th enrollment reports our student population as 49.8% White, 20.8% Hispanic/Latino, 14.6% Black/African American, 7.5% Asian, 6.9% two or more races, and less than one percent American Indian/Alaskan Native or Pacific Islander/Native Hawaiian. FCPS serves students with varying needs, including approximately 11.9% of students with disabilities, 34.8% of students who receive free/reduced-priced meals, and 7.6% of English learners. The greatest change in student demographics includes an increasing percentage of students requiring free/reduced-priced meals and shifting to a minority-majority student population.

FCPS employs over 7,250 staff, who are champions of excellence, collaborating with parents, community members, and local businesses to create an inspiring, academic, safe, healthy and nurturing environment for students. As FCPS prepares to open schools for the 2023-24 school year, the Superintendent, Board of Education, staff, students, and community partners will strive to improve student outcomes as measured by new Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) as guided by the system's updated vision to meet the FCPS Strategic Goals.

FCPS STRATEGIC GOALS & KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (2022-2023)

The following chart summarizes alignment of FCPS Strategic Goals with specific goal areas. Extensive stakeholder engagement occurred to establish the long standing Board of Education (BOE) Strategic Goals. With new system leadership, a more current and refined vision for systemic work was established in light of stakeholder feedback through entry planning. Furthermore, KPIs were drafted to measure system effectiveness. Measures required by FCPS Policy 117, Antiracism are incorporated into the KPIs. Division strategic planning documents will bring focus to priority work to achieve the goals.

Executive Summary (cont.)

Performance on System Goals	
Superintendent's Goal Areas	Board of Education Goal Alignment
<u>Organizational Culture of Achievement</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Structures and routines to build staff capacity High quality teaching Successful outcomes for learners 	<u>Goal 1:</u> FCPS will equip each and every student to be an empowered learner and an engaged citizen to achieve a positive impact in the local and global community.
<u>Operational Excellence</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organizational systems and structures to address system and school needs. 	<u>Goal 2:</u> FCPS will hire, support, and retain staff who champion individual professional, and student excellence.
<u>Safety & Wellbeing</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effective intervention strategies for all students Referral rates to special education Continuum of services for students Compliance 	<u>Goal 3:</u> FCPS will pursue and utilize all resources strategically and responsibly to achieve identified outcomes and inspire public confidence.
<u>Stakeholder Engagement</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Timely, transparent, and concrete engagement Innovative and access opportunities 	<u>Goal 4:</u> FCPS will nurture relationships with families and the entire community, sharing responsibility for student success and demonstrating pride in all aspects of our school system.
<u>Student & Staff Experience</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Procedures and practices to ensure safety and well-being of both students and staff 	<u>Goal 5:</u> FCPS will promote a culture fostering wellness and civility for students and staff.

FCPS is well poised to respond to the academic and social emotional learning needs of its students. An equity-driven, evidence-informed approach will drive all work in FCPS schools. Each school's improvement plan serves as the vehicle for supporting the needs of every child, every day. Schools conduct a comprehensive needs assessment based on data, identify root causes, set measurable goals, and plan for implementation of evidence-informed strategies. Progress monitoring is the heartbeat of the school improvement planning process. Each plan will focus on equity, providing each student or group of students with what they need. Equity requires, by definition, a differentiated response. In addition to an equity-in-action school improvement plan, a new three tiered equity-based staffing model will be implemented providing additional staff to support academics and/or social emotional learning.

Executive Summary (cont.)

A long term plan for the Division of Academics, Curriculum, Transformation, and Student Achievement will focus on developing an organizational culture of achievement, operating with excellence, nurturing safety and well-being for our students, maximizing stakeholder engagement, and ultimately improving the staff and student experience. The following areas will be elevated in the plan:

- Multi-tiered System of Supports (MTSS) for both academics and social emotional learning
- College and Career Readiness (CCR) and personalized pathways for students
- Evidence-informed practices related to the Blueprint for Maryland Schools
- Comprehensive professional learning for all staff
- Premiere special education programs and services
- Expanded supports for students and expansion of Community Schools
- Engagement with stakeholders
- A whole child and whole adult approach to supporting students and staff
- Elevating student voice through system and school improvement efforts

Through these pursuits, and more, FCPS is positioned to implement an educational model that will inspire excellence, transform the student learning experience, develop relationships, and advance the development of every child, every day.



Ensuring Equity in FCPS

In FCPS, equity remains a critical priority. Educational equity means every student has access to the resources and educational rigor he/she needs at the right moment; and, that personal and social identifiers [such as ability, age, ethnicity, gender, gender expression, gender identity, language, national origin, race, religion, sexual orientation, and socio-economic status] are valued as an asset.

Equity employs reflective practice in understanding one's own values and perspectives, and how they might impact students and interactions with colleagues and the community, whether positively or negatively. The focus of the 2023-2024 school year will be to continue our equity-in-action professional learning. All FCPS supported professional learning will be equity-driven and evidence-informed. Our goal is that all FCPS programs, practices, decisions, and actions will be equity-driven.

This year's equity-in-action focus will take a deeper dive into subtle acts of exclusion and create a more inclusive school culture. This means staff are expected to not only examine one's own values and perspectives, and how they might impact students and interactions with colleagues, but to also gracefully stand up and stand for others, demonstrate courage, and take risks to forge improvement. Staff will continue to participate in collaborative reflection on their practice. All school-based staff will be required to participate in a professional learning module on the professional learning day to be held in the Fall of the 2023-2024 school year. This module will be based on how to understand, identify, and stop subtle acts of exclusion. While the module captures the continuing work of equity-in-action, there are multiple professional learning opportunities in which staff will engage to further the work of equity in all facets of their job.

FCPS staff also recognize that the student voice is paramount in planning for and implementing instructional programming and school experiences. As such, ensuring equity in FCPS includes opportunities for students to inform staff about their schooling experiences through programs such as Student Voices. Student Voices fosters understanding between students, within a school and across schools, to develop and implement action plans that address student-identified issues/needs in their school.

In addition to promoting equity for each and every student, ensuring equity in FCPS includes school improvement and accelerated learning processes whereby school teams meet frequently for the purposes of reviewing individual and student group performance and progress, and having collaborative conversations relative to instructional practice and pedagogy. The goal of this process is to respond to individual student needs with thoughtful, appropriate, and strategic instructional decisions. FCPS' approach to instruction fosters the belief that there is no one-size-fits-all approach to instruction. As such, FCPS must address each student's needs through personalized learning and by elevating the student voice to provide more input about time, place, path, and pace.

Staff must also be equipped to meet the individual and unique needs of every child, every day. Therefore, professional learning in the work of equitable instructional leadership and assessment practices is required for all staff throughout the school year in a variety of ways and contexts.

Partnering with the FCPS Community

FCPS values the knowledge, experiences, and expertise of the entire Frederick County community. For this reason, FCPS has engaged a collaborative group of diverse stakeholders to provide ongoing feedback regarding the FCPS Opening Plan from inception, through implementation. Stakeholder groups include, but are not limited to:

- Board of Education (BOE) Citizens Advisory Council (CAC)
- Board of Education Curriculum and Instruction Committee (C&I)
- Board of Education Special Education Citizens Advisory Committee (SECAC)
- Frederick Association of School Support Employees (FASSE)
- Frederick County Administrative and Supervisory Association (FCASA)
- Frederick County Teachers Association (FCTA)
- PTA Council of Frederick County

FCPS has regularly sought community feedback in the development and modification of the Opening Plan. As FCPS has progressed from the initial closure of schools in March of 2020 to more normal operations in the 2022-2023 school year, stakeholder feedback has provided the opportunity to move forward while being transparent with the community about changes in operations.

The Opening Plan for the 2023-2024 school year demonstrates a return to normal operations. The response from stakeholders indicated a high level of comfort with the removal of COVID-19 mitigation practices, the ending of data reporting regarding COVID-19 in the schools, and the ending of other COVID-19 response strategies.

Through feedback gathered from our stakeholders, the following lessons were learned from the pandemic and its impact on school operations:

Importance of in-person instructional opportunities;

- Benefits of virtual learning for some students;
- Value of employee feedback in the response process;
- Importance of transparency in systemic decision-making; and
- Power of collaboration with stakeholders for informed decision-making.

Ensuring the Success of Every Student

Measuring Student Progress

For many years, FCPS has utilized a systemic Local Assessment Framework (LAF) that contains both required and optional assessments, pre-kindergarten through grade 12, and across contents to ensure proper progress monitoring of student performance. These varied assessments provide a comprehensive assessment system which allows members of the BOE, executive leadership, school leaders, and teachers to effectively evaluate student progress. This plan is evaluated annually by a diverse group of stakeholders, which includes the District Committee on Assessment (DCA), required by state legislation.

In the 2022-2023 school year, students will participate in beginning, middle and end of year assessments following the systemic schedule. Local assessments include Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) (reading), and i-Ready (reading and math). These data will help to inform system, school, and classroom improvement efforts. Additional benchmark and unit assessments have been designed by FCPS curriculum staff to ensure effective progress monitoring.

In addition to the general measures noted above, FCPS has created school and system dashboards to evaluate progress in the system's 20 new Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), including state reported measures. The measures FCPS will monitor are noted in Table 1 below.

Table 1: FCPS Goals and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

Superintendent's Goal 1	
Organizational Culture of Achievement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Structures and routines to build staff capacity High quality teaching Successful outcomes for learners
Key Performance Indicators	
<p>1. Increase the percent of students "on track" in 9th grade by X% each year based on Blueprint/MSDE reporting (report county definition 2021-2022 data, baseline state definition 2022-2023). (BOE Presentation: 2/8/2023)</p> <p>2. Increase the percent of students meeting CCR requirements in both ELA and Math at the end of 10th grade based on Blueprint reporting by 20 percentage points each year for the next four years. (Baseline 2021-2022). (BOE Presentation: 6/28/2023)</p> <p>3. Increase the number of students attending preK at each tier by 12% each year (baseline 2022-2023). (BOE Presentation: 2/8/2023)</p> <p>4. Increase the percent of grades 3-8 students scoring proficient and distinguished in each student group, each year, by three percentage points on MCAP ELA and six percentage points on MCAP Math using a cohort model (baseline 2021-2022). (BOE Presentation: 6/14/2023)</p> <p>5. Increase the high school graduation rate to 95%, have no gap greater than two percentage points by race/ethnicity group and increase special service student groups by percentage points each year (baseline 2021-2022). Decrease the high school dropout rates for each student group, each year by two percentage points or maintain less than 5% (baseline 2021-2022). (BOE Presentation: 6/14/2023)</p>	

Ensuring the Success of Every Student (cont.)

Measuring Student Progress (cont.)

Table 1: FCPS Goals and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

Superintendent's Goal 1	
Organizational Culture of Achievement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Structures and routines to build staff capacity High quality teaching Successful outcomes for learners
Key Performance Indicators	
<p>6. Increase the percent of students not chronically absent in each student group by 5% or maintain 95% or above (baseline 2021-2022). (BOE Presentation: 4/19/2023)</p> <p>7. Decrease the percent of students suspended out of school in each student group by 1% (or maintain below 1%); no student group greater than 5%; and have no schools identified as disproportionate in suspension by MSDE (baseline 2021-2022). (BOE Presentation: 4/19/2023)</p>	

Superintendent's Goal 2	
Operational Excellence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organizational systems and structures to address system and school needs
Key Performance Indicators	
<p>8. Increase the percent of qualified applicants each year from baseline (2021-2022) by 2% while increasing new hires of color to mirror the student population. (BOE Presentation: 7/12/2023)</p> <p>9. Increase staff retention rates each year (baseline 2021-2022). (BOE Presentation: 7/12/2023)</p> <p>10. Increase the percent of non-tenured teachers who achieve tenure status (baseline 2022-2023). [This year, we will present the number of non-tenured teachers in FCPS.] (BOE Presentation: 7/12/2023)</p>	

Ensuring the Success of Every Student (cont.)

Measuring Student Progress (cont.)

Table 1: FCPS Goals and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

Superintendent's Goal 3	
Safety and Well-Being	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective intervention strategies for all students • Referral rates to special educations • Continuum of services for students • Compliance
Key Performance Indicators	
<p>11. Decrease the percent of students with disabilities identified in each student group to mirror the student population if the identified group is disproportionate (baseline 2021-2022). (BOE Presentation: 6/28/2023)</p> <p>12. Decrease the number of 4th grade students who require intervention services each year in each student group to mirror the student population (baseline 2021-2022). (BOE Presentation: 6/28/2023)</p> <p>13. Decrease the number of years students who remain in intervention for multiple years using a cohort model (baseline 2021-2022). (BOE Presentation: 6/28/2023)</p>	

Superintendent's Goal 4	
Stakeholder Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timely, transparent, and concrete engagement • Innovative and access opportunities
Key Performance Indicators	
<p>14. Maintain or increase the number of stakeholders who engage with FCPS through options including online grading tool, FOF subscriptions, conference participation, use of social media, and opportunities to engage in community events promoting two way communication (baseline 2021-2022). (BOE Presentation: 8/9/2023)</p> <p>15. Increase the number of active partnerships at the school, department, or system level annually (baseline 2021-2022). (BOE Presentation: 8/9/2023)</p> <p>16. Increase the favorable response rate of parents to 90% on the family engagement survey (baseline 2022-2023). (BOE Presentation: 8/9/2023)</p>	

Ensuring the Success of Every Student (cont.)

Measuring Student Progress (cont.)

Table 1: FCPS Goals and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

Superintendent's Goal 5	
Student & Staff Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Procedures and practices to ensure safety and well-being of both students and staff
Key Performance Indicators	
<p>17. Increase access to gifted and talented programming to mirror FCPS student demographics (baseline 2021-2022). (BOE Presentation: 2/8/2023)</p> <p>18. Increase access to advanced coursework (AP/IB/Dual Enrollment/CTE Completer) at high school to mirror FCPS student demographics (baseline 2021- 2022). (BOE Presentation: 2/8/2023)</p> <p>19. Increase the favorable response rate of students and staff to 90% on the systemic survey related to school climate, safety, and well-being from 2022-2023. (BOE Presentation: Students-4/19/2023; Staff-7/12/2023)</p> <p>20. Increase the favorable response rate of students and staff to 90% on the systemic survey related to workload, academic challenge, and available support from 2022-2023. (BOE Presentation: 2/8/2023)</p>	

Maryland College and Career Ready Standards

FCPS teachers will teach all standards to all students in all content areas. All courses, grade level sequences and instructional materials are aligned to the Maryland College and Career Ready standards including Schoology Blueprint courses provided to teachers through our learning management system. Focusing on the standards will be critical to ensuring student success.

Multiple evidence-informed strategies will undergird the work in schools and for our school system. These strategies align to the systemic five goal areas as detailed below.

Ensuring the Success of Every Student (cont.)

Goal 1: Organizational Culture of Achievement

Multi-Tiered System of Academic Supports (MTSS)

MTSS is a framework designed to organize school resources and services to ensure every student receives the support necessary to be successful. MTSS components provide a continuum of evidence-informed interventions, conceptualized across three tiers of increased intensity.

MTSS is not a specific curriculum or program, rather it is a method for ensuring all students achieve academic, social, emotional, and behavioral success. The Framework goals are to:

- Recognize and respond to individual student needs; and
- Ensure an action orientation to equity in an environment in which students receive the exact support they may need.

High-Quality Instructional Materials (HQIM)

To ensure strong Tier I instruction for all students, FCPS is committed to high-quality instructional materials (HQIM) that will support students' preparation for college and career readiness. Evidence-based research confirms that HQIM, along with high-quality professional learning, positively impact student outcomes. FCPS will ensure strong Tier 1 instruction and HQIM by:

- Continuing to adopt and deploy materials aligned to grade-level standards;
- Aligning materials to the science of reading, rigorous mathematical standards, and all curriculum across grade levels;
- Providing robust professional learning to ensure that both the written and taught curriculum meet the needs of all learners; and
- Equipping educators with the resources to ensure high-quality instruction.

College and Career Readiness (CCR) and Personalized Pathways for Students

The Blueprint for Maryland's Schools calls for all students to be College and Career Ready by the end of 10th grade. This is currently measured by test scores, while the state has conducted a research study to determine alternative measures that may be considered. A strong core curriculum with high quality instructional materials and good first instruction is at the heart of student success. Appropriate progress monitoring tools must assist school teams to evaluate student progress and respond accordingly. Personalized pathways can be accomplished in a variety of ways including supplemental instruction, intervention, tutoring, and summer programming. FCPS will be exploring appropriate schedules, staffing, and programming to ensure personalized pathways for every child, every day.

Accelerated Learning Process (ALP)

Developing Collective Teacher Efficacy (CTE) is a high yield strategy to increase student learning outcomes. The ALP is an evidence-informed framework that offers a system-wide process for ongoing job-embedded professional learning, educator collaboration, and continuous, collective assessment of student learning with the specific goal of transforming teaching and learning. These regular meetings afford educators the opportunity to:

- Monitor student learning;
- Administer data-driven decisions that promote personalized learning;
- Share evidence-based instructional strategies; and
- Examine student work.

Ensuring the Success of Every Student (cont.)

Career Awareness and Coaching

By ensuring student access to career awareness, exploration, and preparation, student connections are promoted between their own educational achievement and career options across pathways. The Career Coach program serves as a collaborative effort between FCPS, Workforce Services, and Frederick Community College. Every middle and high school has an assigned Career Coach that ensure students receive:

- Continuous opportunities to explore and define their career goals;
- Knowledge, skills, and resources necessary to render informed decisions as they pursue their post College and Career Readiness (CCR) pathways; and
- Exposure to an ever-evolving labor market thus positioning students to navigate it successfully.

Framework for Teaching (FfT)

Highly effective teaching has been proven to be the most important variable in increasing student learning. The FfT serves as an instrument to support and enhance the professional growth of teachers as they continuously strive towards increased student achievement. The instrument offers:

- Common language that promotes coaching conversations between teacher and evaluator;
- A coaching model that encompasses goal setting and individualized professional growth in four distinct areas; and
- Elements to ensure a comprehensive arrangement for professional learning.

Equitable Grading Practices

Personalized pathways ensure equitable assessment and grading practices for students pre-kindergarten through grade 12. Through a rigorous feedback cycle which focuses on clear learning goals and success criteria, students strive to master critical content. Core principles and practices of equitable grading include:

- Emphasizing grades that measure student performance and are aligned to grade-level, curriculum standards;
- Reflecting multiple evidence of student learning over a varied time period;
- Indicating student progress toward standard(s) proficiency;
- Affording educators an opportunity to provide meaningful feedback; and
- Minimizing grading disparities from teacher to teacher.

Mind, Brain, Education (MBE)

MBE science unifies research from psychology, neuroscience, and educational pedagogy to enhance the teaching and learning process by using transdisciplinary research. Implementation of MBE leads to:

- Improving student learning and achievement through quality instruction;
- Closing the achievement gap;
- Recruiting, supporting, and retaining a high-quality, diverse workforce;
- Infusing evidence-informed strategies into the curriculum and resources; and
- Increasing educator efficacy.

Pre-Kindergarten Expansion

Research supports access to high-quality pre-kindergarten for all eligible 3 and 4 year old students. In alignment with the Blueprint for Maryland's Future, FCPS has established the goal to raise the level of kindergarten readiness across the county so that students are more prepared academically and socially for their educational experience. To accomplish this initiative, FCPS has:

- Received significant funding by the State which is accompanied by significant oversight and monitoring of our programming; and
- Established a public-private mixed delivery system whereby the public school system and private childcare providers work together to provide access to pre-kindergarten throughout the county.

Ensuring the Success of Every Student (cont.)

Goal 2: Operational Excellence

Adopting Research-Informed Practices Related to the Blueprint for Maryland's Future

FCPS is committed to maximizing student learning time as well as educator planning and collaboration time. For this reason, system and school leaders will seek to:

- Convene bi-monthly System Improvement Team meetings to evaluate current schedules, staffing, and school structures;
- Elevate personalized pathways for students; and
- Implement a new career ladder.

Comprehensive Professional Learning for All Staff

Professional learning for all staff including support staff, certificated staff, and leaders is imperative to a school system that will thrive through continuous improvement efforts. The new Department of Equity and Organizational Development will ensure that learning is purposeful, timely, and appropriate for adult learners. An Equity Driven and Evidence Informed Approach will guide all development and implementation of key learning.

Comprehensive Behavior Problem Solving/Management

All FCPS will benefit from de-escalation professional learning with the aim of providing staff with proactive and preventative strategies to support students.

Exceptional Leaders Innovating and Transforming Education (ELITE) Leadership Pipeline

Research indicates the significance of an effective administrator on numerous school outcomes such as achievement, attendance, and increased staff satisfaction and retention; the need for professional learning experiences is essential to build a strong pipeline of school leaders. The ELITE pipeline is a comprehensive professional development program that prepares visionary and transformational leaders to serve students, staff and communities of FCPS. The ELITE Leadership Pipeline provides:

- Development of innovative, equity-focused, and research-informed leadership practices through experiential learning and reflection;
- Extension of thinking, philosophies and practices through engagement in compelling dialogue;
- Opportunities for collegial relationships with systemic leaders as well as mentorship; and
- Opportunities to strengthen written and oral communication skills through job-specific scenarios.

Leadership Evaluation that Promotes a Culture of Accountability (PSEL Standards)

A high quality principal is second only to the teacher in affecting school and student outcomes. Self-reflection and ongoing feedback is essential to a continuous improvement culture and establishing operational excellence. Informal observations of leaders, structured visits aligned to goal setting and improvement work, and formal reviews of data and evidence towards goals serve an essential role in the school leadership evaluation process. In addition, student outcome data is incorporated into each principals' evaluation to foster a culture of accountability paired with pertinent coaching for celebration and improvement.

Ensuring the Success of Every Student (cont.)

LIFT Leadership Coaching

Research suggests that principals benefit from the coaching relationship by increasing the coachee's self-efficacy. Leaders Inspire and Facilitate Transformation (LIFT) Leadership Coaching features open-ended questions that lead to self-reflection and a search for solutions, followed by determining an action plan with accountability measures between the partners. It allows for a more personalized, tailored approach to leadership development, that focuses on topics and issues important to the coachee. Engaging in coaching affords both the coach and coachee the opportunity for:

- Increased job satisfaction and retention;
- Reflective practice;
- Relevant, job-embedded, experiential, and personalized learning; and
- Thought partners to process challenges in a non-evaluative trusting relationship.

National Board Certification/Career Ladder

FCPS is keenly aware of the increasing national, state, and local staffing shortages in education. For this reason, FCPS is working to create a clear and competitive career ladder and salary schedule that foster an educator-friendly work environment with an emphasis on a student-first mindset. Key elements of the FCPS career ladder will include: (a) elevated teacher autonomy, (b) increased time for collaboration, (c) expanded embedded leadership positions, (d) enhanced professional development opportunities, and (e) increased personalized growth pathways. FCPS workforce will be strengthened by:

- Empowering teachers to seek professional growth based on their specific advancement interests (administration, curriculum & instruction, educational leadership, National Board Certification, etc.);
- Engaging, data-driven, personalized, and rigorous instruction that advances student learning and understanding;
- Hiring, retaining, and supporting a high-quality and diverse workforce; and
- Cultivating evidence-informed educators prepared to address ongoing and evolving systemic needs.

Professional Learning for Continuous Leadership Development

High-quality professional learning drives continuous improvement, engages leaders in collaborative learning, and facilitates shared responsibility for improving education for all students. The provision of high quality professional learning and support ensures that leaders have the skills and competencies to meet the demands and realities of their roles, thus leading to positive outcomes for staff, students, and communities. High quality, continuous professional learning provides:

- Increased leader self-efficacy which positively impacts work performance and effectiveness;
- Elevated opportunities to connect and collaborate with system colleagues; and
- Enhanced experiences geared toward actively constructing, analyzing, evaluating, synthesizing, and applying learning to enhance and extend knowledge and practices.

Professional Learning for Curriculum and Pedagogy

A key component of student achievement is students' understanding of content at a high level of cognitive demand. Educators must possess content capacity and employ evidence-informed strategies that are grounded in the science of learning in order to ensure the success of all students. Content and pedagogy professional learning are critical particularly when high quality instructional materials (HQIM) are used in FCPS schools.

Ensuring the Success of Every Student (cont.)

Professional Learning for Special Educators

Through a collaborative effort between the Departments of Special Education/Student Services and Organizational Development, FCPS will offer job-specific professional learning opportunities and expand staff capacity for the following positions:

- Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBAs)
- Special education coordinators
- Special education instructional assistants
- Special education teachers
- Special education supervisors

Professional Learning for Support Staff

FCPS support staff serve as the foundation of the school system and represent more than 180 distinct roles. These employees are vital to supporting the needs of FCPS employees, families, schools, and staff. All departments share responsibility for the onboarding and ongoing development of support employees related to their particular competencies and fields of expertise. The Support Employee Growth Manager, housed in Organizational Development, assists in this effort through:

- Assisting departments with the design and delivery of growth opportunities specific to employee needs;
- Collaborating with external providers and credentialing agencies to secure funding and resources to support the growth and development of support employees;
- Curating and creating resources to support the growth of all support employees; and
- Incorporating system goals into actionable professional learning opportunities for support employees.

RISE Induction and Mentoring

FCPS recognizes the paramount need to support teachers new to the profession. For this reason, the RISE Induction Experience is a three-year comprehensive program that includes varied evidence-informed professional learning opportunities and MSDE courses designed to meet the diverse needs of new hires. Aligned with district priorities, the RISE Induction Experience is a high-quality program that:

- Accelerates the development of new hire effectiveness;
- Increases student learning;
- Improves new hire retention;
- Strengthens educator leadership; and
- Supports equitable outcomes for every learner.

The RISE induction experience includes comprehensive support for first- and second-year teachers from a building-level mentor who receives training in cognitive coaching and collaborative conversations so they can provide non-evaluative feedback to early career teachers.

School-Based Teacher-Leader Development

Central staff work regularly to build the capacity of school based leaders such as math specialists, literacy specialists, interventionists, department chairs, team leaders, STEM leaders, equity representatives, special education leads, and more. Well-equipped leaders at the school-level are critical to ensuring strong ALP and School Improvement Planning processes.

Ensuring the Success of Every Student (cont.)

Vanguard Teacher Program

Vanguard Teacher leadership is critical to school improvement, especially teacher leadership that is focused on teaching and learning. Now more than ever, school leaders rely on teacher leaders to advance instructional change with the aim of increasing student achievement. The Vanguard Teacher Program is a three-year, competency-based teacher leadership program focused on personalization of learning. Cohorts of teachers progress through the Teach, Lead and Coach years of the experience attending forums, completing independent work and submitting micro-credentials to show their growth. This program creates those much needed teacher leaders in our schools.

Premier Special Education Programs and Services

FCPS is committed to providing premier special education programs and services for all students with disabilities. Through the guidance of FCPS' Blue Ribbon Task Force and the special education audit completed by the Public Consulting Group (PCG), FCPS will aggressively pursue:

- Adopting best practices for the establishment of highly-effective co-teaching in Tier I classrooms;
- Creating a vision, mission, and strategic plan to guide all work related to special education;
- Dedicating more resources and time to special educators;
- Defining best practices for the scheduling of students with disabilities;
- Enhancing educator professional learning to promote successful outcomes for students with disabilities;
- Equipping educators to provide specially designed instruction;
- Establishing clear roles and responsibilities for all special education staff members;
- Expanding program structures and resources;
- Increasing continuum of services to meet the varied needs of students; and
- Work collaboratively to identify best practices for scheduling, staffing, and effective school structures.

Goal 3: Safety and Wellbeing

Multi-Tiered System of Social-Emotional Supports (MTSS)

MTSS is a framework designed to organize school resources and services to ensure every student receives the support necessary to be successful. MTSS components provide a continuum of evidence-informed interventions, conceptualized across three tiers of increased intensity.

MTSS is not a specific curriculum or program, rather it is a method for ensuring all students achieve academic, social, emotional, and behavioral success. The Framework goals are to:

- Recognize and respond to individual student need; and
- Ensure an action orientation to equity in an environment in which students receive the exact support they may need.

Code of Conduct

FCPS strives to create safe, positive, healthy, and inviting school climates that foster respect, responsibility, trustworthiness, fairness, caring, and good citizenship. To support these efforts, FCPS is adopting a new Code of Conduct with corresponding policies and regulations that provide a philosophy of behavior intervention that is rehabilitative, restorative, and educational. The Code of Conduct also provides a discipline framework that promotes fair and consistent student discipline. It details student behavioral expectations and the consequences associated with violating these expectations.

Ensuring the Success of Every Student (cont.)

Student Discipline: Enhancements to Practices and Processes

Student discipline is intended to teach and motivate students to demonstrate appropriate behavior. FCPS utilizes progressive discipline which means consequences are escalated when patterns of inappropriate behavior persist after administering less intensive consequences. To ensure consistent administration of student discipline and common language, FCPS will be adopting a common discipline referral at both the elementary and secondary levels. The common referral will be aligned with the Code of Conduct and delineate behaviors that must first be addressed by teachers or other school personnel as opposed to behaviors that immediately rise to the level of intervention by a school administrator.

Goal 4: Stakeholder Engagement

Expanding Supports for Students and Community Schools

Essential to support of a whole-child approach is expanded services and supports to address student needs. Beyond academic development, FCPS staff can support students with their mental health, physical health, cognitive development, social emotional, and identify development. The coordination of comprehensive support for student needs is essential to student success.

Continuing Implementation of FCPS Community Schools Initiative

FCPS currently has five community schools that receive additional funding via the Blueprint for Maryland's Future. The purpose of these funds are to expand the current high-quality educational opportunities provided, ensure that all students are successful academically, and eliminate any achievement or opportunity gaps that may exist. The Five Pillars that guide the work of community schools are: expanded enrichment opportunities, enhanced and increased family and community partnerships, a culture of collaborative leadership practices, integrated student support and high quality academics. Needs Assessments were completed for four of the schools last year using information from students, staff, families and community partners. The fifth school will complete their needs assessment this year. These needs assessments will be used to create implementation plans that will lead the work and use of Concentration of Poverty funds for the next three school years.

Engagement with Stakeholders

There are many opportunities to engage key stakeholders in the success of the school system and each school. Parents and guardians, community members, students, and staff all play an essential role in shaping the direction of improvement efforts. Whether engagement provides opportunities to inform, consult, involve, collaborate, or increase agency, stakeholder engagement is an essential variable in the continuous improvement process.

Community Engagement and Partnerships

There are various opportunities for the FCPS community to engage and partner with our schools. FCPS has systemic partnerships that support activities at the district level or at multiple schools. Systemic partnerships can support the strategic plan or help meet a systemic need. School partnerships are one-to-one relationships between businesses or community groups and individual schools. School partnerships work to support School Improvement Plan goals and strategies or the CPS strategic plan goals at the school level.

Parent Engagement

Parent engagement is foundational to the success of public schools. As required in each school's improvement plan, parents should be afforded the opportunity to participate in a school committee or group that encourages parental input into school improvement endeavors. Some schools maintain a Parent-Teacher-Student Association (PTSA) or Parent Teacher Association(PTA), while other schools have initiated parent advisory committees.

Ensuring the Success of Every Student (cont.)

Goal 5: Student and Staff Experience

Every Child, Every Day Focused on the Whole Child and Whole Adult

Using the lens of whole child development and a whole adult approach to refine and improve practices ensures that decisions are informed by research and that each and every person is seen, heard, known, and supported.

Well-Rounded Curriculum

To ensure that we maximize relevance and student engagement, expand access to all facets of the instructional program, and allow students to pursue personal areas of interest, FCPS will continue to prioritize a well-rounded curriculum that includes:

- Fine arts
- Physical education, wellness, and health education
- Computer science and technology education
- Career education
- World languages
- Other elective areas
- Specialized programs and facilities.

Master schedules, staffing decisions, instructional resources, and high quality programs will continue to demonstrate this commitment to all students, as they develop lifelong skills, talents, citizenship, and career pursuits.

Whole-Adult Approach

Trusting, collaborative relationships among leaders are foundational to developing a high quality workforce that strives toward operational excellence while considering the safety and wellbeing of FCPS leaders. Trust is at the center of the whole adult and cultivating the person, the environment, and the job allows us to develop a high trust organization.

Through this lens, a focus on the whole-adult provides:

- Opportunities for growth through professional learning;
- A chance to connect with others to build community;
- A belief that a healthy work-life balance supports belonging, personal and professional growth, and wellbeing; and
- Relevant, evidence-informed learning that provides a sense of autonomy and choice.

Whole-Child Approach

A focus on whole-child development means FCPS understands the importance of a shift from the historic notions about the outcomes schools aim to achieve. The Whole-Child Approach takes six components of human development into consideration (mental health, physical health, social emotional development, identity development, academic development, and cognitive development), all underpinned by a supportive and equitable environment. Advances in the understanding of how children learn over the last decade have led to the emergence of new fields in education, including the Science of Learning or Mind Brain Education Science (MBE).

Ensuring the Success of Every Student (cont.)

School Improvement Process (Elevating Student Voice)

FCPS utilizes an evidence-informed School Improvement Process with a plan that serves as a roadmap to changes or upgrades that must occur to transform the school environment with an ultimate goal of improving student outcomes. All schools must conduct a Comprehensive Needs Assessment, Root Cause Analysis, and Theory to Action. These exercises produce essential goals that are specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and timely. Schools must then identify evidence-informed strategies to facilitate improved outcomes for students. Progress monitoring data is an essential component of each school's plan. School leaders must align resources, including human, fiscal, and professional learning to achieve the goals. Stakeholder engagement is essential to a successful process and elevating student voice in the planning, implementation, and monitoring process will be a hallmark of each FCPS plan moving forward.

Continuous School Improvement

All aspects of the Student and Staff Experience stem from the planning and implementation of the School's Improvement Plan (SIP). In each FCPS school, a team will conduct an annual Comprehensive Needs Assessment (CNA), identify root causes to problems, utilize research with consideration to the school specific context (evidence-informed practice), set goals, and monitor progress to align to system Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). Schools align results of the equity and system survey to improvement efforts. The FCPS SIP will:

- Require strong equity work;
- Work to develop flourishing cultures of high achievement;
- Maximize safety and wellbeing; and
- Elevate student and staff voice which will ultimately improve the student and staff experience.

Showcasing Students through Student Activities and Extracurriculars

Research shows that when students are engaged in real world experiences, leadership development, educational experiences outside the classroom, and extracurricular activities, they are better positioned to thrive in college, careers, and their community. FCPS will continue to focus on equitable access and growth of student programs outside the classroom, to provide:

- Academic enrichment
- Social emotional engagement
- Career exposure,
- Opportunities in extracurricular activities and athletics.

Options are limitless, but are built upon existing programs such as student leadership programs, performing arts, academic competitions, clubs, athletics, STEM programs, and more.

System and School Focus on Maximizing Student Voice

All FCPS schools will be required to demonstrate, via their schools improvement plan, opportunities to collect student voice and engage students in the improvement planning process. In addition, FCPS has a more formalized Student Voices (SV) Program that is facilitated through the Equity Office. The SV Program promotes a sense of belonging at and between FCPS schools. Student Voices provides an opportunity for students to build relationships with peers and teachers in their school community and the larger Frederick County Public Schools (FCPS) community. The program aims to create a structure where students listen to the perspective of others, discuss misconceptions, and plan how to transform their school into a place where everyone belongs, is united, and has a voice. Currently, the Student Voices Program is occurring in multiple FCPS middle and high schools.

Ensuring the Success of Every Student (cont.)

Interscholastic Athletics and Activities

FCPS will offer the full slate of interscholastic athletics and activity opportunities to students. FCPS high school students will have the opportunity to participate in the sanctioned Maryland Public Secondary Schools Athletic Association (MPSSAA) athletic program. All students will have the opportunity to participate in extracurricular activities, such as clubs, academic teams, and honor societies.



Identifying Student Readiness

FCPS has created a comprehensive process to determine readiness and learning gaps early in the school year. Table 1 provides details regarding the FCPS Assessment Plan for the 2023-2024 school year. Similar to the 2022-2023 school year, FCPS will use a local assessment plan, along with the state diagnostic assessment to identify where students are in their learning and what instruction, tutoring, or intervention may be required to meet individual student needs.

Specifically, the plan includes local assessments—Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS), i-Ready, the Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT), and county-created assessments—along with state assessments. DIBELS is a battery of short (i.e. one-minute) fluency measures that assess early literacy skills. The DIBELS assessment serves as a universal reading screener. i-Ready is used as the local assessment for both reading and math. i-Ready is a valid, third party, reliable, computer-adaptive assessment that provides criterion and norm-referenced assessment results. CogAT is used as a universal screener for gifted and talented identification.

Table 1: 2023-24 FCPS Assessment Plan

Grade Level	English/Language Arts	Mathematics
Pre-Kindergarten	Foundational Skills Assessments (County-Created)	Math Snapshots (County-Created)
Kindergarten	KRA	KRA
Grades 1-2	DIBELS Writing Samples	i-Ready Benchmark Assessments (County-Created)
	CogAT (Grades 2 & 5)	
Grades 3 & 5	DIBELS (Grade 3) DIBEL Oral Reading Fluency (Grades 4 & 5) i-Ready Core Program Module Assessments	i-Ready
Grades 6 – 8	CogAT (Grade 5)	
	i-Ready	i-Ready ALEKS Math Assessment
	Course Specific Assessments (County-Created)	
High School *in high school, i-Ready Reading is administered to students in English 9 and 10.	i-Ready*	ALEKS Math Assessment
	Course Specific Assessments (County-Created)	

Identifying Student Readiness (cont.)

FCPS continues to monitor student outcome data. Table 2 includes the end-of- year (i.e., Spring 2023 administration) assessment results for DIBELS (reading), and i-Ready (reading and math) by respective grade levels and each student group.

The FCPS projected student outcome data for the DIBELS assessment is a five percent increase for each student group as aligned to FCPS' Strategic Goals. The projected student outcome data for the i-Ready assessment is a three percent increase for each student group for both content areas. New targets for the 2023-2024 school year will be established upon review of beginning-of-year data for students.

Table 2: 2022-2023 End-of-Year / Spring Performance

Student Group	READING				MATHEMATICS			
	DIBELS*	i-Ready**			i-Ready**			
	K-2	3-5	6-8	9-12***	1-2	3-5	6-8	9-12***
All Students	75%	61%	47%	21%	60%	61%	43%	20%
Asian	88%	80%	73%	50%	76%	83%	75%	39%
American Indian	^	^	43%	^	^	^	42%	^
Black/African American	73%	53%	39%	12%	48%	47%	31%	16%
Hispanic/Latino	58%	43%	30%	13%	42%	44%	25%	11%
Two or More Races	79%	63%	46%	11%	59%	61%	39%	17%
White	80%	67%	53%	24%	69%	68%	49%	28%
Free/Reduced Meals	59%	41%	26%	9%	40%	40%	21%	12%
Students with Disabilities	44%	20%	12%	3%	35%	24%	11%	8%
English Learners	44%	19%	2%	0%	29%	25%	5%	2%
Male	74%	58%	43%	17%	62%	63%	43%	21%
Female	76%	64%	51%	25%	59%	59%	43%	20%

*DIBELS Composite: % At Benchmark + Above Benchmark
 **i-Ready: % Above + On Grade
 ***All Grade 10 + Yearlong ENG 9 (Reading)/Yearlong Algebra (Math)
 ^ n < 10

Identifying Student Readiness (cont.)

The 2023 projected student outcome data for the DIBELS assessment was to have a five percent increase for each student group. Table 3 includes the results for the end-of-year administration (i.e., Spring 2023 administration) of the DIBELS reading assessment for both the 2022 and 2023 school years.

With the exception of Asian students, FCPS saw increases in DIBELS performance among each student group. Specifically, FCPS was successful in meeting its goal in three student groups—Black/African American, two or more races, and students receiving free/reduced meals. The 2023 projected student outcome data for the i-Ready assessment was a three percent increase for each student group for both content areas. Table 4 includes the end-of-year (i.e., Spring 2023 administration) of i-Ready assessment results.

Table 3: Tracking Student Progress-DIBELS Reading Performance (Kindergarten – Grade 2) 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 School Years

STUDENT GROUP	DIBELS READING* End-of-Year/Spring Administration		GOAL MET: > 5% Increase
	2021-2022	2022-2023	All Student Groups
All Students (K-Grade 2)	71%	75%	
Asian	90%	88%	
American Indian	**	**	
Black/African American	67%	73%	✓
Hispanic/Latino	55%	58%	
Two or More Races	72%	79%	✓
White	76%	80%	
Free/Reduced Meals	51%	59%	✓
Students with Disabilities	41%	44%	
English Learners	42%	44%	
Male	70%	74%	
Female	72%	76%	
*DIBELS Composite: % At Benchmark + Above Benchmark ** n < 10			

Identifying Student Readiness (cont.)

Table 4: Tracking Student Progress- i-Ready Reading and Math
2022-2023 School Year

FCPS has changed its norm-referenced, valid, third-party, reliable, computer adaptive assessment in the 2022-2023 school year to i-Ready. In the previous year, the Performance Series was used. The scores between these two assessments are not a one-to-one comparison, thus, year-to-year comparison data do not yield accurate conclusions. i-Ready will be used in the 2023-2024 school year, therefore, the 2023 school year will serve as a baseline. Grades 3-5 math is an exception as i-Ready was administered in the 2021-2022 school year; data shown below for these grades. FCPS was successful in meeting this goal for Grades 3-5 math; there was more than a three percent increase among each of the student groups using i-Ready.

Student Group	i-Ready Reading*			i-Ready Mathematics*			
	Grades 3-5	Grades 6-8	Grades 9-12**	Grades 3-5		Grades 6-8	Grades 9-12**
	2023 Baseline			2022 Baseline	2023	2023 Baseline	
All Students	61%	47%	21%	55%	61%	43%	20%
Asian	80%	73%	50%	80%	83%	75%	39%
American Indian	***	43%	***	***	***	42%	***
Black/African American	53%	39%	12%	41	47%	31%	16%
Hispanic/Latino	43%	30%	13%	38%	44%	25%	11%
Two or More Races	63%	46%	11%	53%	61%	39%	17%
White	67%	53%	24%	63%	68%	49%	28%
Free/Reduced Meals	41%	26%	9%	32%	40%	21%	12%
Students with Disabilities	20%	12%	3%	21%	24%	11%	8%
English Learners	19%	2%	0%	21%	25%	5%	2%
Male	58%	43%	17%	57%	63%	43%	21%
Female	64%	51%	25%	54%	59%	43%	20%
*i-Ready: % Above + on Grade	** All Grade 10 + Yearlong ENG (Reading)/Yearlong Algebra (Math)					***n < 10	

Identifying Student Readiness (cont.)

The 2024 projected student outcome data for the DIBELS assessment is a five percent increase for each student group as aligned to FCPS' Strategic Goals of decreasing the number of Grade 4 students requiring reading intervention. The projected student outcome data for the i-Ready assessment is a three percent increase for each student group for both content areas. New goals may be established upon review of the beginning of year assessment results.

Advancing FCPS' Students with Disabilities and 504 Plans

The rights of students with disabilities to a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) and equal opportunity to educational services is mandated whether students return to school in-person or they access the Remote Virtual Program (RVP). Throughout the pandemic, special educators, general educators and service providers created and delivered meaningful lessons and instructional activities, virtually and in-person, for all students with disabilities and 504 Plans. For the 2023-2024 school year, FCPS will continue to provide a FAPE as required under 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) to students with disabilities. Guidance provided by the United States Department of Education (March 2020) and Maryland State Department of Education, Division of Early Intervening and Special Education Services will be followed when considering the delivery of services, whether virtually, or face-to-face. FCPS will ensure that students with disabilities and 504 Plans have access to the general education curriculum with the services, supports, and appropriate accommodations identified on their IEPs or 504 Plans.

During the 2023-2024 school year, special educators will collaborate with general educators to ensure that IEP accommodations are implemented and available for all instructional and learning activities delivered to students. This process will also be in place for students attending non-public placements. All FCPS and non-public schools will collect data on goals and objectives, and enter progress for each student into the MD Online IEP (OIEP) at least on a quarterly basis. Accommodations in student 504 plans will be implemented as indicated in students' plans. Students who require related services (speech/language, occupational therapy, counseling, etc.) will receive direct services from a special educator or service provider in person and, in rare circumstances, through telehealth platforms. For students requiring accommodations, adaptive computer software will be provided. This software will be provided not only for students receiving special education and 504 services, but for all FCPS students to support their individual digital learning needs. Some of the adaptive computer software include Google Read/Write Extension, Equatio, word prediction software, screen enlargement, enlarged keyboards, and eye gaze technology among others. In the event students utilize technology platforms, these platforms include the learning management software of Schoology and instruction is delivered synchronously through the Google Meet technology platform. These technology platforms allow for the cyber security and confidentiality of student information. Students with IEPs who qualified for extended school year (ESY) received their instruction in-person based on an IEP team decision from June 26-July 27, 2023. Students had access to all technology and adaptive computer software in order to engage in extended school year services. Students' individual education programs that incorporated distance learning services were implemented with fidelity. All students with IEPs or 504 Plans will receive instruction in-person five days per week, based on the FCPS school calendar. Special education and 504 Plan services will be provided as determined through the IEP and 504 process. Instruction and learning activities are provided in a variety of ways, based on the individual needs of students, with appropriate accommodations in place. General and special education teachers, as well as related service providers, will meet consistently to discuss students' progress, how to appropriately document this progress, and how services are delivered. For students new to a school building or program, transitioning supports, such as transition tours, are scheduled for students with disabilities. All of these requirements increase the need for IEP and 504 meetings. These meetings will be held in-person or virtually, based on the availability of the family in order to increase maximum family participation and engagement in decisions about students' needs. Within the context of distance learning, FCPS plans to implement the guidance provided through the MSDE Division of Early Intervention and Special Education Services.

Advancing FCPS' Students with Disabilities (cont.)

To support individualized special education services for students with disabilities, within the context of distance learning, if warranted during the school year, FCPS will employ one of several options for documenting the services to be provided while students are in distance learning due to extended school closure: 1) Implement the IEP as written through virtual instruction; 2) Amend the IEP with parent agreement (outside of the IEP Team meeting) to supplement student's current IEP, or; 3) Revise the IEP if the parent is not in agreement to the amended IEP (through the IEP Team meeting process). In addition to these considerations, FCPS staff will collaborate with the family to determine how the general education instruction offered to all students can be adapted for the student with an IEP, and how special education and related services can be provided consistent with each student's IEP. This requires reviewing the components of the student's current IEP to identify the services that can be delivered in the distance learning environment and redesigning services, modifications and/or accommodations, as needed, to continue providing FAPE to the student with a disability. Through this collaborative process, staff will identify/develop strategies to provide instruction so that the student can make progress on their IEP goals and the general education curriculum grade-level standards and to prevent regression in learning, to the greatest extent possible, during this unprecedented time.

Remote Virtual Program

All students with IEPs or 504 plans for the 2023-2024 school year are being offered in-person instruction, five days a week. FCPS is also offering a remote virtual program for students enrolled in Grades 3-12. As families communicated intent, IEP and 504 team meetings were held to determine the appropriateness of enrollment in a remote virtual program. If deemed appropriate through the IEP process, special education services will be provided virtually to students as outlined on each student's IEP. In some cases, where virtual services are not appropriate to meet the needs of students, some students may receive in-person services through the home/hospital teaching (HHT) process. IEP teams will determine the unique services needed in the event the student qualifies for HHT services.

Recovery/Compensatory Services

Recovery/Compensatory services have been rendered for every student with an IEP and 504 Plan as determined through the IEP process to redress learning loss during the 2020-2021 year of school closure.

Continuity of Learning in Emergency Conditions

In accordance with SB 300/HB 714: Learning Continuity Plan, FCPS continues to develop continuity of learning in emergency situations in active IEP and 504 plans. This process includes input from the parent on how to best operate during emergency conditions, and allows a review of the successes and failures of the IEP.

Maintaining the Health and Safety of the FCPS School Community: COVID-19

Isolation Protocols

Individuals who do not have COVID-19 test results and are sick and/or suspect they are positive for COVID-19 are encouraged to stay home. Individuals are encouraged to test for COVID-19 five full days after exposure. Those who test negative can return, those who test positive are encouraged to stay home for at least five days before returning.

Air Quality

Supplemental, portable air purifiers remain in use in school health rooms. If it becomes necessary, ventilation systems will be programmed, within their design and operating parameters, to increase fresh air supply into school buildings. MERV-13 filters are employed in equipment, where possible.

Home Test Kits

FCPS Health Rooms will supply COVID-19 home test kits until FCPS's inventory is depleted.

Face Coverings

FCPS welcomes and encourages face coverings in all system buildings. Face coverings are available for distribution until FCPS's inventory is depleted. Individuals who have been exposed to COVID-19 are encouraged to wear a face covering for ten full days after exposure, starting with the first full day after exposure.

Hand Washing and/or Hand Sanitizing

FCPS will continue to emphasize hand washing and hand sanitizing etiquette for staff and students.

Contact Tracing

FCPS is not tracing positive cases of COVID-19.

Communication Plan

When three or more positive cases of COVID-19 have been present in a classroom, a letter is sent home to all families of students in that class.

Health Equity

FCPS staff has built local partnerships and engaged multiple community stakeholders throughout Frederick County to identify, monitor, and address populations of students and citizens that may have been disproportionately affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Through collaboration with Frederick County Health Department, FCPS Judy Centers, Frederick Regional Health System, the Mental Health Association of Frederick, and local pediatric practices, FCPS is able to help reduce the barriers to healthcare resources and services required to prevent, reduce, and manage physical, behavioral, and mental health needs arising from or related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

FCPS currently has five community schools. Community schools partner with family and community organizations to expand the current high quality educational opportunities provided, helping to ensure that all students are successful academically, striving to eliminate any achievement or opportunity gaps that may exist. Expanded enrichment opportunities, enhanced family & community partnerships, a culture of collaborative leadership practices, and integrated student support, including, but not limited to, mental and physical health services, all are strategically implemented and incorporated as integral components of the community schools. Each community school has a dedicated community school coordinator and dedicated school nurse who assess community needs unique to each school and use funding to provide resources that address the needs of students and families that may create barriers to learning.

Maintaining the Health and Safety of the FCPS School Community: COVID-19 (cont.)

Central Review Team

The Central Review Team (CRT), composed of representatives of school administration, school health services, facility operations and FCHD, meets as needed to support agility in the system's response to COVID-19.

The CRT monitors the current data points and information from government agencies to build a macro understanding of the community health conditions and a micro understanding of the impact in each school and classroom. During the CRT meetings, the team reviews data sourced from the CDC, and FCPS system data as well as any new information from government agencies and national professional medical associations.

The CRT can make recommendations directly to the Superintendent for immediate action to allow school operations to be flexible and adaptable to the needs created by health conditions.

Virtual Instruction Plan for Short or Long Term Closures

When closing school for a short or long term closure, the impacted classroom or school(s) will implement a balance of synchronous and asynchronous instructional opportunities. Instruction will focus on the Mind Brain Education (MBE) strategies of interleaving and retrieval practice with the main priority being continuity of learning. Instruction will be provided via Google Meet sessions and/or instructional videos. Google Meet sessions may be accessed via computer or via phone. Corresponding asynchronous work will be provided via the Schoology learning management system and/or via paper packets.

Elementary School

All FCPS elementary schools are 1:1 with Chromebook access. The elementary school model will include digital instructional modules with synchronous support from staff. Instructional modules will be available via the Schoology learning management system and downloaded in advance for students in the event there is no access to the internet. Synchronous support will be provided via virtual touchpoints in Google Meets and telephone support for students without internet access. Should an internet outage occur, students would access the pre-downloaded materials. Instructional staff will be available throughout the regular school day hours via Google Meet or telephone in the event there is no internet access to ensure flexibility for student access to instructional support.

Secondary School

All FCPS secondary schools are 1:1 with Chromebook access. The secondary school model will be similar with instructional modules downloaded from Schoology to ensure access if internet connectivity is unavailable. Each student will have access to all classes via Google Meet in their schedule with both synchronous and asynchronous support available. Instructional staff will also be available via telephone for students without internet access.

Specialized Instruction

Specialized instruction for students with special needs will be provided in multiple formats. For English learners, screencasts of the instructional concepts will be provided utilizing comprehension strategies and a sheltered approach to support unique learner needs. These screencasts will be pre-loaded on student Chromebooks to allow access even without an internet connection. Students with disabilities or students with a 504 plan will have their needs met via scheduled Google Meets, telehealth sessions, asynchronous activities or telephone touchpoints by special education and other service providers.

Maintaining the Health and Safety of the FCPS School Community: COVID-19 (cont.)

Student Schedules

Each schedule begins as a delayed opening to allow students, families, and staff to adjust and prepare for the often impromptu Virtual Instructional Plan. Schedules are noted below. It is important to note that the larger block of teacher work time at the elementary level is to incorporate teacher planning, which is otherwise built into the secondary period and block schedules. Synchronous schedules are implemented for approximately four hours in the morning which allows for individualized support for students via Google Meets in the afternoon.

Elementary

Time	Content/Activity
8:30 – 10:30	Teacher Time
10:30 – 11:15	Morning Meeting/PATHS
11:15 – 12:00	Primary ELA/Intermediate Math
12:00 – 12:30	Lunch
12:30 – 1:15	Intermediate ELA/Primary Math
1:15 – 2:00	Science/Social Studies
2:00 -4:00	Asynchronous Work/Touchpoints/Teacher Work Time

Middle

Time	Content/Activity
8:00 – 10:00	Teacher Time
10:00 – 10:22	Period 1
10:26 – 10:48	Period 2
10:52 – 11:14	Period 3
11:18 – 11:40	Period 4
11:44 – 12:14	Lunch
12:18 – 12:40	Period 5
12:44 – 1:06	Period 6
1:10 – 1:32	Period 7
1:36 – 3:00	Asynchronous Work/Touchpoints/Teacher Work Time

High

Time	Content/Activity
7:15 – 9:30	Teacher Time
9:30 – 10:12	Block 1
10:16 – 10:58	Block 2
11:02 – 11:32	Lunch
11:36 – 12:16	Block 3
12:20 – 1:02	Block 4
1:06 – 2:45	Asynchronous Work/Touchpoints/Teacher Work Time

Maintaining the Health and Safety of the FCPS School Community: COVID-19 (cont.)

Access to Devices and Internet Connectivity

Devices

All FCPS students have 1:1 device access use at home and in school.

Internet Connectivity

Most FCPS students have access to internet connectivity through their home, outside wifi spots in the community, and at designated schools. Most staff have access in their homes, which will allow for telework approved by a supervisor, however, all staff will have access to internet access via FCPS buildings. In the event any student may not have or may lose access to the internet, students may call into Google Meets, and FCPS will push out instructional modules prior to a short term closure that will be housed on individual student devices allowing students to complete assignments without requiring connectivity. The content of these modules will be correlated to the curriculum indicators for the students' grade level. Paper packets will also be available at elementary schools with instructional touchpoints as noted above. FCPS will implement a multi-layer plan to ensure each and every student has access should they be in attendance on a virtual instructional day.

General System and School Preparations

FCPS strongly believes that in-person learning is the priority to maximize student learning opportunities. Any implementation of a virtual instructional environment would be made after all in-person opportunities have been explored. The change in format would be intentionally focused to only move the students impacted by the current health and/or environmental conditions to a virtual format.

Any decision to move students to virtual instruction would require schools to evaluate the individual needs of the students impacted by the format change. Students with high needs may still be brought into the school in a small group to provide any needed instructional support. Students who would be considered for the small group in-person learning include those receiving specialized instruction, special education or 504 plan services, and students without internet access.

Students known in advance to be without internet connectivity will be scheduled for a phone conference with instructional staff and provided materials via downloaded content on the Chromebook or paper packet. As needed and as conditions allow, students with no internet access may be scheduled in a group for in person instruction. In addition, students will be able to use the call in feature of the videoconferencing platform to access the audio of synchronous instruction and have individual touchpoints with staff for progress monitoring and instructional support.

School staff will share the instructional content through the Schoology learning management system that will be used for virtual instruction. The content can be downloaded prior to the short term closure to be able to serve as stand alone asynchronous instruction if internet connectivity is not possible.

Maintaining the Health and Safety of the FCPS School Community: COVID-19 (cont.)

FCPS will send systemic messages regarding procedures for how decisions will be made and communicated for any virtual instruction needed to respond to school health conditions. Instructional staff will review the procedures with students prior to the school closure. Schools will send directions for how to access and complete virtual instructional content via normal communication pathways - Schoology, FindOutFirst, One Call Now, and paper handouts.

Instructional staff are issued laptops with cameras to allow for fully synchronous instruction. Instructional staff also have access to all instructional resources both on and off school sites. Staff will provide synchronous instruction from FCPS classrooms. The FCPS Telework Plan is still in effect with supervisor approval.

Safely Transporting FCPS Students

On February 25, 2022, the CDC lifted the requirement that people wear masks on buses or vans operated by public or private school systems, including early care and education/child care programs. This CDC change aligns with updated guidance that no longer recommends universal indoor mask wearing in K-12 and early education settings in areas with a low or medium COVID-19 Community Level. Therefore, FCPS will not require masks while riding a school bus.

However, FCPS will continue to implement several protocols that will continue to promote safety for the students and the drivers. Ventilation will be increased by utilizing the roof hatches and opening windows. Cleaning and disinfecting products remain available on each school bus for drivers to utilize. FCPS will also continue to monitor local, state, and federal guidelines related to the safe transport of students and will modify protocols, if needed.

FCPS continues to ensure compliance with all Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA) and COMAR regulations related to school vehicle standards. Proper inspections and repair are completed within the required timelines. In addition, drivers will continue to conduct their pre-trip inspections at the beginning of their run. During this inspection, the bus driver checks the entire school bus outside and inside to ensure the bus is in safe working order to transport students. All drivers will attend a mandatory in-service meeting/training before students return to school this fall. Current and contingency protocols, include information on ventilation, seating requirements, face covering, inspections, and safety protocols will be shared. Transportation supervisors will monitor compliance with requirements, especially if there are modifications needed throughout the school year.

Special Transportation

As part of a student's IEP, transportation may be a service required to provide a FAPE. Special transportation requirements will continue to be met. There are currently no requirements for COVID response related to special education services. However, any additional guidance provided by the Division of Early Intervention and Special Education Services within the MSDE will be followed.

Transportation Contingency Plans

Currently, there are no federal, state, or local mask requirements on school buses. FCPS is prepared to implement mask wearing procedures again, if the requirements change. If face coverings are required in the future, students will wear face coverings at all times when on a school bus, and drivers and assistants will be required to wear face coverings at all times when students are on the bus. FCPS will supply face coverings for students and staff who need them.

In addition, FCPS is prepared to implement assigned seating, if needed, to promote clear expectations, support case investigation, and to reduce student contact. When possible, members of the same household can be seated next to each other. Families will also be encouraged to drive or walk their children to school, if possible, to reduce the number of students on buses. Families choosing to transport their own students helps reduce load counts on buses and increase the ability to maintain more distancing between students.

Safely Transporting FCPS Students (cont.)

If case rates increase, each bus driver will be provided a spray bottle filled with an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) approved disinfectant and cleaning cloths. Bus drivers will be required to clean high touch surfaces on their buses after morning and afternoon routes using the provided cleaning products. Special cleaning emphasis will be placed on seats, handles/railing, and window controls.

Special Education Transportation Contingencies

If face covering requirements return, FCPS understands that the health needs of students may prevent some students from wearing them. If necessary, strategies for mask wearing for students with disabilities will be implemented according to guidance outlined in the MSDE Guidance document, "Tips to Support Mask-Wearing for Students with Disabilities," published by the Division of Early Intervention and Special Education Services. Exceptions to the face covering requirements must be documented and approved.

Effectively Communicating with the FCPS School Community

FCPS is ready to welcome students for face-to-face instruction with a virtual option available to families. FCPS is committed to providing the community with back-to-school updates and any changes to health protocols. FCPS has an established history of communicating with its stakeholders in a timely, transparent, and concise manner. FCPS remains committed to proactively engaging with the community throughout the 2022-2023 school year. The Associate Superintendent of the Department of Public Affairs will serve as FCPS' point of contact to coordinate communications.

FCPS utilizes several effective channels to provide students, staff, parents/guardians, and community members with the most up-to-date information. They are as follows:

FindOutFirst- Stakeholders can sign up to receive email and emergency-closing-phone text messages based on the areas of interest they select. FindOutFirst also posts to the FCPS Maryland Facebook and Twitter pages. To sign-up for this free subscription, click [here](#).

One Call Now- Parents and guardians are automatically signed up for this communication platform when they register their child(ren). Families and staff are notified about weather delays, school closings and other school and district information via text message and email.

Superintendent's Update- Stakeholders can view the bi-weekly publication from the Superintendent of schools by clicking [here](#). Timely topics and updates are provided along with useful links to community health partners.

FCPS Website- Stakeholders can obtain information, updates and engagement opportunities. The [site](#) includes the latest information concerning all aspects of returning to school for the 2023-2024 school year. In addition, several pertinent Quick Links are available to help with navigation. They are:

- Athletics
- Bus Status Information
- Calendar
- Enrolling a Student
- FindOutFirst Email & Test
- Meals
- Schoology
- Virtual Tutoring