

Bedford County Public Schools Return to School Plan 2020–2021

Narrative Summary of Required Elements

Submitted to the Virginia Department of Education July 23, 2020

Section 1: Operational Infrastructure to Support Learning

A. In person learning for grades PK–6 will be Monday through Friday with a slightly shortened school day. Elementary schools will generally house grades PK–3 for in person learning. Bedford Primary will house PK and K only, while Bedford Elementary will house grades 1–3. Some learners in grade 4 will be housed in elementary schools, while others will be housed in middle schools. Middle schools will house grades 5 and 6, as well as some learners in grade 4. The school day at primary and elementary campuses will start at 8:00 a.m. and finish at 1:30 p.m. The school day at middle school campuses will start at 9:00 a.m. and finish at 2:30 p.m. Learners in grades PK–6 will be grouped in ways that minimize interactions with other learners to the extent possible. Physical distancing will be practiced as much as possible in all learning environments, which will require additional staff to monitor supervision. Staff will be required to wear masks when they cannot physically distance. Elementary resource teachers will produce learning activities that will be implemented within the general education setting to limit mixing.



B. Blended learning (combination of in person and remote learning) will be facilitated for grades 7–12. In person learning will take place at high school campuses from 10:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Initially each learner will be required to attend school in person 2 days each week. Half of the learners will attend on Mondays and Thursdays and the other half will attend on Tuesdays and Fridays. Wednesdays will be used as a flex day for students who need extra support. After an initial period of time, learners may attend in person more or less frequently, based on their individual needs. Each student will be assigned a learning coach who will serve in an advisory role. The learning coach will be the primary way for both the learner and the parent/guardian to navigate school in the blended model. Initially learning coaches will focus on getting to know students and social and emotional learning (SEL). Coaches will also assist students with setting up times to meet with teachers individually or in small groups. Teachers will reach out to learning coaches to facilitate in person activities. Blended learning will be supported through Virtual Virginia, Canvas, and other online tools. Some courses will require more frequent face-to-face learning than others, and those face-to-face sessions will be given priority in scheduling within the overall blended learning structure. Learners can enroll in three to four courses each semester, but may not necessarily be working on all courses at the same time, as asynchronous progressions will be supported whenever possible. Certain elective and CTE courses may run during the entire school year, and these courses will be considered when balancing concurrent semester course loads.




C. Transportation – We are asking families to transport their children to and from school for in person learning. This will provide additional capacity on buses, given the health and safety considerations that will be in place. Those who ride the bus will be required to wear masks. Students will be physically distanced on the bus, with some seats closed to students. However, members of the same household will be permitted to share the same seat. We will also have all windows open on buses, whenever weather permits, in order to circulate the air inside the bus and mitigate the potential spread of COVID-19.



D.

Communication – BCPS has been utilizing Facebook and YouTube to broadcast video messages to families, employees, and our community since April 2020. These broadcasts have drawn a large viewing audience and are also archived on our BCPS website. The website also includes a dedicated “Return to School” site that includes updated information about the 2020–21 school year, as well as a frequently asked questions section. We attempted to reach out to all families by phone during June 2020 and connected with approximately 4,000 parents/guardians, which represents 64% of all families that we serve. Our division uses School Messenger as well for emails and call outs to our families. In mid–July, we also sent an electronic form that asked parents/guardians to commit to a learning option (in person, blended, or 100% remote), as well as a transportation option (bus or parent/guardian vehicle) for each of their children during the 2020–21 school year. We are also following up with phone calls to any family that did not submit the form. The results of these forms will drive planning decisions in the identified areas.

E.



Technology – BCPS instituted a 1:1 Chromebook initiative for all learners in grades 6–12 during the 2019–20 school year. During 2020–21, we will expand this 1:1 program to grades 3–5. We will also make every effort to provide Chromebooks to any learners in grades K–2 who elect the 100% remote option and do not have another device available to use at home. Additionally, we are working to support Bedford County in a major expansion of broadband Internet access that will hopefully reach approximately 24% of households that currently do not have access. Part of our efforts will include making the new Internet access more affordable to families of school-age children to the extent possible.

Section 2: New Instruction for All Students

A. Students with Disabilities –

i. Individual Education Plans (IEPs) were written for students with disabilities in grades PK–6 in the spring of 2020 with plans for face-to-face learning Monday through Friday. IEPs will be followed as approved for these learners and amended, as necessary, if any significant changes to our overall planning occurs.

ii. IEP teams will reconvene for learners in grades 7–12 to determine if the student’s needs are adequately addressed to support learners in the blended learning model. If not, IEPs will be amended to meet the needs of the individual learner. Students with disabilities have the option of attending 1–5 days a week based on the determination of the IEP team.

iii. Students with disabilities in grades K–5 were invited to in person summer school during July 2020. Case managers worked directly with summer school teachers to assist with filling instructional gaps that may have developed as a result of the school closures between March 16 and May 29. Students who qualified were given Extended School Year (ESY) services virtually through the month of June and July in combination with face-to-face services.

B. English Language (EL) Learners –

i. English language learners in grade K–5 were invited to in person summer school during the month of July 2020. EL students in grades 6–12 were offered extended virtual support during the summer of 2020 as needed.

ii. All English Language (EL) learners will receive their services as identified in their individual EL plan during the 2020–21 school year. EL teachers and tutors will work with each school to develop a schedule to ensure services are met. EL students will be offered the option for attendance in the blended learning environment 1–5 days a week based on need identified in their individual plans.

C. Gifted students will continue to receive services through identified gifted teachers. Gifted teachers will be placed at schools to support identified students in a manner that limits contact with multiple schools to the extent possible. Gifted teachers that work in multiple schools will participate in mandatory health screenings upon entering school buildings. Fourth and fifth grade learners assigned to middle school buildings will continue to receive services from elementary gifted teachers.

D. Gap Group – Learners in grades K–6 will be assessed in reading and math skills by mid–September to determine remediation groups. Students will receive additional services from reading specialists, classroom teachers, paraprofessionals, and remediation teachers to address any learning gaps that may be present. Pacing guides for the school division are being revised to consider any need to review content from the 2019–20 school year. Learning coaches serving learners in grades 7–12 will help to determine the number of courses and pace of instruction for any student that displays significant learning gaps from 2019–20. The school division is also identifying essential skills and competencies for teacher use and developing resources to assist teachers in delivering new instruction, as well as assessing student progress, related to these essential skills/competencies.

E. All teachers, as well as other instructional staff, will be required to participate in training during July, August, or September focused on facilitating high quality remote and blended learning, as well as meeting social and emotional needs of learners. The 2020–21 calendar has been adjusted to include additional instructional collaboration days throughout the school year. Furthermore, many secondary teachers will also be trained as “learning coaches” to support students in advisory roles meeting both academic and social and emotional needs.

Section 3: Identification of Instructional Gaps and Student Needs

A. Learners in grades K–6 will be assessed in reading and math skills by mid–September to determine remediation groups. Students will receive additional services from reading specialists, classroom teachers, paraprofessionals, and remediation teachers to address any learning gaps that may be present. Pacing guides for the school division are being revised to consider any need to review content from the 2019–20 school year. Learning coaches serving learners in grades 7–12 will help to determine the number of courses and pace of instruction for any student that displays significant learning gaps from 2019–20. The school division is also identifying essential skills and competencies for teacher use and developing resources to assist teachers in delivering new instruction, as well as assessing student progress, related to these essential skills/competencies.

B. The school division will use the Illuminate progress monitoring and benchmark platform to assist teachers with assessing student levels in math and reading. This platform will be used to evaluate growth throughout the school year and to provide formative assessment tools for instructors.

Section 4: Remote Learning

A 100% remote learning option will be offered to all students in grades K–12. Additionally, all teachers will be trained in remote learning in case another extended closure forces all learning to be provided remotely at any time during the 2020–21 school year. BCPS instituted a 1:1 Chromebook initiative for all learners in grades 6–12 during the 2019–20 school year. During 2020–21 we will expand this 1:1 program to grades 3–5. We will also make every effort to provide Chromebooks to any learners in grades K–2 who elect the 100% remote option and do not have another device available to use at home. We will utilize Canvas as our learning management system to support remote learning. Teachers will have access to all of the content from Virtual Virginia and Edgenuity for use in the development of their course content. Learners will connect with teachers and learning coaches virtually to help to ensure success in both acquisition of material and social/emotional health. Parents/guardians electing the 100% remote learning option were required to indicate that choice no later than July 21, 2020, and commit to at least one full semester of learning remotely. Extracurricular and other after–school activities at all levels (as offered) will still be available for learners participating in the 100% remote learning option.