

2020-2021

# BACK *to* SCHOOL

## Frequently Asked Questions

MNPS will start school on Aug. 4 with all students learning remotely due to the increasing community spread of COVID-19. However, some of the questions below concern a return to in-person learning to help students and families prepare for the unique circumstances we can expect when that's possible.

### ONLINE LEARNING

*If we start in an all-virtual setting, what will be the criteria for shifting to provide an in-person option?*

Metro Schools will continue to monitor the spread of COVID-19 in consultation with the Metro Health Department to determine when it is safe for in-person schools, following the Mayor's roadmap for reopening when possible. Key factors will include the rate of community spread, with the goal of being at or below an R0 of 1. Decisions will be communicated at least two weeks prior to a shift back to in-person classes so that students and staff can appropriately prepare.

*Will Honors and AP classes be offered in both formats?*

Yes, Honors and AP offerings will be available whether a student is in-person or virtual.

*Will MAP testing occur in both formats?*

Yes, the MAP assessment can be administered in both formats.

*Synchronous or asynchronous? If asynchronous, is the pace limited?*

The virtual environment will be mostly asynchronous, meaning students will work at their own pace, but will also include synchronous opportunities for students to connect with their teachers and peers in real time. Virtual lessons will follow the same timeline as in-person classes.

*Will the virtual curriculum mirror in-person classes?*

Yes, MNPS will use the same curriculum for in-person classes as will be used for virtual classes in order to allow for easier transitions between the two formats.

*Will the online lessons be the same as the lessons given in person?*

All teachers will be operating off a standard curriculum in both the in-person and virtual environments. Though lessons may be customized by the teacher, the content and goals of the lessons will be the same.

*Are the online classes going to be livestreamed, or will it be a pre-recorded lesson (from their instructor) that they watch, or will the student be given a link to an online*

*module to go through?*

Teachers will be required to host live classroom instructions for a certain number of hours based upon their grade/tier and area of focus. Virtual classes will be recorded and posted for students who are unable to participate at that time. Additional learning content will be provided through the MNPS curriculum vendor.

*If it is a pre-recorded video lesson from their instructor, will they be able to watch it more than once?*

Livestreamed classes will be recorded and available for students to watch or re-watch at their own pace.

*Are the online classes livestreamed? If not, do online students have to log in at a certain time of day and for a certain number of hours, or do they just consume the online content at their own pace?*

Virtual schooling will primarily be asynchronous, meaning students will work at their own pace, but there also will be synchronous opportunities for students to connect with teachers and peers at the same time.

*Are the classwork/homework modules that students complete online created by their teacher, or are they generated from another source?*

Teachers will be provided with a curriculum that includes pre-produced homework and classwork assignments, but some teachers will create their own depending on their own content as well.

*If they are not created by the teacher, what source will they be using?*

As a district, we're proposing to contract with the Florida Virtual School to provide curriculum for online classes as well as for in-person classes when it is safe to return.

*Will MNPS be outsourcing online content for instruction?*

Yes, MNPS is proposing to contract with the Florida Virtual School for a curriculum that will be used for in-person and virtual lessons.

*How will classes that require hands-on instruction, equipment and materials such as labs, art, and band be addressed online?*

To the extent possible, we are preparing to provide students with materials they will need to learn at home. Our virtual curriculum will include the opportunity for students in these classes to use common household items to support learning at home.

*How will tests be given online in a manner that ensures the integrity of the system relative to an in-person test where the ability to find answers from other sources is impossible?*

Lockdown browsers and a plug-in installed on student-issued computers can track additional browser windows opened during an assessment. Quality assessments allow the student to demonstrate thinking as opposed to solely identifying answers.

*If a parent opts to do homeschooling for a semester, will their child's seat at an optional school be available in the fall?*

Students who are disenrolled to participate in non-MNPS homeschooling will not have their seats held for them at an optional school. If there is a waiting list, those students will be provided the opportunity to attend. If seats are available when a parent opts to send their student back to an MNPS school, that option may be available.

*Who is the point of contact if my child needs assistance in online classes?*

Each student will be assigned a point of contact, or navigator, at the school for check-ins, technical assistance, and other questions that arise in the online setting.

*How can families access an interpreter if they need support in a language other than English?*

Families can contact the Family Information Center at 615-259-4636. The Family Information Center will connect the family with a member of the MNPS Office of Translation Interpretation and Services.

*How should schools and teachers communicate with families that speak a language other than English at home?*

Teachers and staff must use interpretation and translation services for communication with non-English Language Background families as required by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Schools should use their Parent Outreach translator to proactively contact students and their families to ensure they can participate in any school-provided instruction and other school and/or community-based activities.

*How should schools and teachers request interpretation and translation services?*

Schools should contact their assigned Parent Outreach Translator. If they do not have an assigned translator, school staff can email [translation@mnps.org](mailto:translation@mnps.org). Please see the [OTIS Request Guide](#) for more information, and email [Manuel.DiazDeLeon@mnps.org](mailto:Manuel.DiazDeLeon@mnps.org) if you have any questions or concerns.

## **STUDENT SUPPORT**

*What supports are in place for students and their families who are not proficient at using computers?*

MNPS will offer training sessions to help students and families learn how to use the devices that will be issued to families that need them. The training sessions will be translated in the primary languages spoken in MNPS. Additionally, we are expanding the help desk to better support students and families using technology.

*What happens if a computer breaks or is not working and a student cannot get online to get instruction?*

Technology support will be offered through the MNPS Help Desk at (615) 269-5956.

*How can a family that speaks a language other than English get technology support in their language?*

Starting July 27, 2020, families that speak a language other than English can receive technology assistance by calling 615-259-8787. MNPS will have an interpreter and technology support specialist ready to assist them.

*How will IEPs/504 Plans be implemented in a virtual or an in-person environment?*

All students will have equitable access to core content provided by teachers. There are teams working to provide materials and supports that are differentiated and focused on meeting each student's need.

For students with an IEP or a 504 plan, we are developing a COVID-19 Continuous Learning Individualized Plan (CLIP) that you should receive by August 4. The CLIP will identify how MNPS intends to implement the services and supports outlined in your child's IEP or Section 504 Plan when we are in a virtual setting.

It is our goal that students are learning the first day of school (August 4) and that students are being assessed for any regression that has occurred during school closures. Teachers and related service providers will begin supporting access to core content and interventions as well as related services at the start of the school year. School staff will establish a schedule of ongoing check-ins and expectations for parent communication. School teams will continue to collect data and monitor your child's progress to determine if their needs are being met.

For students engaged in transition activities, school staff will explain how employment and community-based instruction will be addressed as a result of the Metro Health Department's order that mandates what phase the city is in.

*Will paraprofessionals or teachers be allowed to support students in their home environments for virtual learning?*

MNPS will be using a variety of virtual platforms to interact with students. At this time, MNPS employees will not be entering individuals' homes. This is for the safety of our employees and our families. Paraprofessionals will continue to support students and the classroom remotely. Paraprofessionals may support students in a variety of ways through virtual learning: alongside teachers during instruction, individual or small group instruction as directed by the teacher, or in check-ins/check-outs with you or your child using your preferred communication method. Paraprofessionals providing behavior supports will work closely with you to help implement behavior strategies. Supports from paraprofessionals during virtual learning will be documented on the Continuous Learning Individualized Plan (CLIP).

*Can guardians of children with disabilities choose a hybrid schedule?*

MNPS is not offering a hybrid schedule to any students at this time. As we start the school year, school buildings will be closed to students until we can move to an in-person learning option. The options available to all students will also be available for students with disabilities.

*How will Speech and OT, PT, and other related services be provided with online instruction?*

Related services will be provided through the Teams platform, which was successfully used during the summer for ESY.

*If a student or family has an issue with the implementation of the student's IEP, who should the student or parent contact to discuss the issue?*

The family should contact their child's school principal and special education teacher to discuss their concern. If there are additional concerns that have not been resolved, please contact [EEquestions@mnps.org](mailto:EEquestions@mnps.org).

*What expectations are there for classroom teachers and special education and EL teachers to co-plan and coordinate teaching?*

Classroom teachers and special education/EL teachers must collaborate and co-plan between content and other teachers in supporting all learners to provide accommodations, modification, accessibility and equity for all students. Teachers must implement accommodations and modifications found in the IEP, or as determined in the CLIP. For English language learners, teachers must also implement language accommodations and scaffolds found in the ILP.

*Will students receive supplies, materials and equipment to address IEP goals?*

If there are not safety concerns regarding the use of the supplies, materials, or equipment, then the items stated in your child's IEP will be brought to your home. You will be contacted by a district specialist to determine if your child's equipment can be safely used at home and/or if alternative methods are available.

*How will MNPS conduct IEP or 504 meetings? And address regression from school closures?*

When MNPS school facilities are closed, we will conduct virtual IEP meetings. When our facilities are open, IEP meetings will be in person.

MNPS has worked throughout the summer to provide opportunities for learning and to ensure equitable access to all content areas to the extent possible. This has included opportunities for intervention/remediation in the areas of mathematics, literacy, and social skills.

Unfortunately, most students likely experienced regression during the extended closure. Regression is the decline in knowledge or skills due to an interruption in education; recoupment is the time it takes to regain skills to prior level of functioning. Once the school year begins, MNPS will assess the impact extended school closures had on the learning of all students. Regression will initially be addressed by incorporating teaching of missed standards. Remediation of regression is complex and requires time and resources. Decisions regarding regression and recoupment are determined individually and must be based on empirical, qualitative, and predictive data. While implementing your student's IEP, we will also be gathering data to make these determinations. Accordingly, any regression services will need to be considered on an individualized basis with the IEP team after students have been back in school.

*Will there be a contact person the student and/or parent can speak to about issues they are having with the teacher, the platform, the resources, and/or the assignments?*

Families should contact their school's principal if there are issues with the teacher.

*What is the protocol for dealing with issues the student may have, either with instruction or comprehension of lesson plans?*

Families should contact their child's teacher and school principal if issues arise. Translation and interpretation will be provided by MNPS if needed. [Homework Hotline](#) is also available as a free resource for students.

*Can an online student who qualifies for FRL access meals? If so, how?*

Meals will be provided for students participating in a virtual environment. Those students who do not attend a CEP school must qualify for a free and reduced lunch or pay for the meals. Cafeterias will offer grab-and-go meals and will partner with MNPS Transportation for meal delivery when feasible.

*How will English Learners services be provided with online instruction?*

EL services will continue to occur daily from certified EL teachers in the virtual setting. EL services align with grade-level standards and curriculum. Schools select service models from district service model options based on each student's English proficiency level and Individual Learning Plan (ILP). The service model selected in a regular setting carries over to the virtual setting.

ELs with more than one WIDA ACCESS domain score below 3.5 shall receive one hour per day of virtual ELs service from an EL teacher (sheltered ELD/ELA class, co-teaching, or services during PLT).

Students scoring 3.5 or above on WIDA ACCESS composite, reading, writing, and one (1) other domain on the WIDA ACCESS and ELs in kindergarten scoring between 20 and 27 on all domains of the W-APT may have services tailored to their needs, including fewer hours of virtual EL direct instruction based on their ILP, skills-based interventions, and other services that are differentiated for each EL.

*What expectations are there for classroom teachers and special education and EL teachers to co-plan and coordinate teaching?*

Classroom teachers and special education/EL teachers must collaborate and co-plan between content and other teachers in supporting all learners to provide accommodations, modification, accessibility and equity for all students. Teachers must implement accommodations and modifications found in the IEP and language accommodations and scaffolds found in the ILP.

*What are the requirements for updating ILPs in the virtual setting?*

Each active English Learner, including students who waived EL services, have an Individual Learning Plan in ELlevation. The ILP includes each student's EL demographics, Can Do Descriptors, classroom accommodations, and language progress goals. All teachers must implement the classroom accommodations and update Individual Learning Plans (ILP) in ELlevation as progress is made on language development goals. Individual Learning Plans (ILP), formative language assessments, and ACCESS data in the reading, writing, listening and speaking domains inform EL services. ILPs are updated every 4.5 weeks by all teachers who work with the student.

*How will school systems administer the Home Language Survey to newly enrolling students? If a family indicates a language other than English on the Home Language*

### *Survey, how will the school system screen the students for EL identification within 30 days?*

The required Home Language Survey (HLS) is embedded in the Online Registration (OLR) form. In all settings, families are filling out the HLS upon initial enrollment.

The Office of English Learners is continuing registration and assessment of newly enrolling NELB students at 10 remote registration and assessment centers across the district to allow for social distancing. Students are screened using the WAPT/WIDA Screener for EL eligibility. During intermittent closures, we will continue to complete as much of the process as possible and assess upon return to physical buildings.

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## **TRANSPORTATION**

### *Will there be bus service/transportation? Will there be social distancing/masks required on buses? What about MTA/WeGo?*

When school is being held in person, yellow-school-bus transportation will be provided. Families will be encouraged to provide transportation for the students, when possible, to reduce the number of bus riders at any one given time.

MTA/WeGo buses will be running. The district has been in close communication with them. The district expects that when schools are being held in person, MTA/WeGo will be running a schedule that is very close to their normal schedules. Since MNPS's decision to be virtual or in-person will be largely determined by community spread, the district anticipates that when school is not being held in person, MTA/WeGo's schedule's will likely also be reduced.

### *How will students socially distance on buses?*

Students will be required to wear masks on buses. There will be a limit of two students per seat, and seating charts will be created to allow for grouping based on the bus stop. Students will be asked to keep their distance from others when exiting the bus.

Special transportation included in a student's IEP will also be provided and follow the safety procedures outlined above.

### *Will buses be disinfected between rides?*

Bus drivers will disinfect seats after the morning and afternoon runs. The manufacturer recommendations for the disinfectant is to allow for 30 minutes drying time between applications, so it is not feasible to do this after every bus run.

Between rides, bus drivers will wipe touch points such as handrails and the tops/backs of seats with sanitizing wipes.

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## **STAFF/PERSONNEL QUESTIONS**

### *Will teachers be asked to do virtual and in-person classes?*

Teachers for in-person classes may still use remote options, such as Schoology, to supplement their classroom experience, but they will not be asked to teach all virtual students in addition to a full in-person schedule. There may be teachers with specializations whose daily schedules are organized to provide virtual classes and in-person classes.

*What kind of training will the online teachers receive before school begins if they are doing instruction online for the first time?*

When the district moved into Remote Learning 2.0 last spring, more than 4,500 teachers attended live interactive webinars to support online instruction. Throughout the summer, teachers have enrolled and completed Level 1 and Level 2 self-paced courses. An additional live event will be held on July 31<sup>st</sup>. Teachers will also have access to district Learning Technology Specialists for support.

*Will the online instructors be collaborating and lesson planning with the in-person instructors?*

Online instructors will be staff from the physical school where the student attends. Administrators should conduct staff meetings whenever possible to allow for attendance of all relevant staff.

*If they are using an existing source, will all teachers across the district be required to use the same source?*

Online instructors will be staff from the physical school where the student attends. Administrators should conduct staff meetings whenever possible to allow for attendance of all relevant staff.

*If an online instructor becomes sick and is unable to work, will a substitute teacher take over the online instruction, or will the students be given to another online instructor?*

In the event an online instructor is unable to work, then school administration will follow normal substitute policies.

*What is the maximum amount of students an online instructor will be assigned?*

Teachers will have the same amount of students in a virtual setting as they would in an in-person setting.

*If the online teacher is different than the in-person instructor, will the students they are assigned only be from my student's school or will they be providing instruction for students from several schools?*

In extremely rare cases, it is possible that a student learns from teachers in multiple schools. This provides an advantage to students who would be able to access some courses that may not be available at their assigned school.

*If the online lessons are not livestreamed from the student's school, will their online teacher be different than the one they would have if they were attending in person?*

Teacher assignments, either in-person or virtual, will be made by the school administration based on student needs. If a student chooses the virtual option, they will be paired with a virtual teacher. Though some teachers may have both virtual and in-person assignments based on their grade-level tier or specialty, teachers will not be required to teach students in-person and virtually for the same class.

## **IN-PERSON INSTRUCTION**

### *Will COVID-19 testing be required before students are allowed in-person instruction?*

No, CDC guidelines and local health officials do not recommend all students or staff be tested prior to classes. Staff will undergo screening for symptoms related to COVID-19 each day, and families will be asked to monitor symptoms of their children and keep them at home and/or get tested if they have COVID-19 symptoms.

### *Will movement of students be limited?*

Yes. In the interest of public health and mitigating the spread of COVID-19, students will not be able to move about as freely at school as they could before the pandemic.

### *Will in-person classes include interactive/digital learning?*

Yes, students working in a remote or in-person will have access to the same digital content.

### *How will masks and social distancing be enforced?*

Administrators will clearly communicate expectations for social distancing and masks using CDC guidelines before the in-person school year begins, as buildings reopen and throughout the school year. Staff will remind students and families of the COVID protocol and procedures on a continuous basis using verbal or written reminders. Should there be a violation of a safety protocol or procedure, the school will follow the schoolwide behavior plan.

### *Is there a cap on the amount of students that will be allowed in a typical classroom to maintain social distancing?*

Due to classroom configurations, six feet of distance between desks will not often be feasible, but desks will be spaced as much as possible and facing in one direction.

### *Will teachers be responsible for enforcing social distancing between students and enforcing wearing masks?*

Yes, teachers will be responsible for enforcing social distancing between students and enforcing wearing of masks, using a restorative practices approach.

### *What kind of support will teachers have to enforce these things?*

Teachers will follow schoolwide behavior plan guidelines. As with any infraction, teachers would follow the schoolwide behavior plan to address non-compliance.

### *What ramifications does a student face for not wearing a mask and/or not social distancing?*

Ramifications will be progressive in nature and can range from a conference between teacher and student to a restorative conference with student and parents to the issuing of a collaborative referral. As a last resort, removal from the environment would be used.

### *What policies are in place to address bullying around social distancing and mask wearing?*

Board policy 6.304, “Student Discrimination, Harassment, Bullying, Cyber-bullying, and Intimidation,” would apply.

*Who will be supplying teachers with cleaning materials for the classroom?*

The district will provide sanitizing wipes to teachers.

*Will masks be required at all times unless the student is eating lunch?*

When social distancing is not possible, students and staff will be asked to wear masks to reduce the spread of COVID-19 while in school buildings.

*If students are not mindful of personal space and social distancing in the hallways and are too close or bumping into other students, what is the recourse and who is monitoring/enforcing appropriate behavior?*

Social distancing should be encouraged wherever *possible*.

*If a student and/or teacher tests positive for COVID, does the school shut down?*

Determinations about when to shut down will be made on a case-by-case basis in consultation with the Metro Health Department. Factors to be considered include when the student was last in school, whether they were symptomatic, if the movement of the student was confined to a limited area or group of students, etc.

*If it shuts down, do those students then get assigned an online instructor for the duration of the shutdown?*

In the event a school closes, all students and staff will move to the virtual environment. Students will remain with their assigned teachers.

## **EXTRACURRICULARS**

*Will there be band/choir/theater/debate/etc. in the virtual setting?*

Related arts classes in K-8 and performing and visual arts courses in grades 5-12 will continue in the virtual setting to the extent it’s possible, but not everything can be replicated.

*Can parents attend their children’s games?*

This will depend on public health guidance about the number of people allowed to gather at an event.

*When can parents volunteer at schools again?*

This will be determined based on public health conditions.