FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

SCHOOL RE-ENTRY & STUDENT LEARNING OPTIONS

***Parents & Students* – UPDATED 7/17/2020**

The District's comprehensive S.A.F.E. Re-Entry Plan *was announced on July 6. Please understand that portions of the plan are subject to change based on direction from the Shelby County Health Department and State officials, as well as CDC guidance. Additional updates will continue to be shared as we work toward the start of the school year.*

Procedures may vary to an extent at individual schools, so families should also expect to hear directly from their principals and teachers leading up to the start of the school year.

Don't forget to update all contact information in PowerSchool this summer to receive important updates from the District and schools. Also be sure to stay tuned to SCS and school websites and social media pages for news and announcements about the reopening of schools.

FAQ CATEGORIES:

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INSTRUCTION & STUDENT PROGRAMS

1. When is the first day of school for the 2020-21 school year?

The School Board approved an updated 2020-21 school year calendar on July 13. The new year will begin on August 31 and end on June 16 for students. The calendar updated was based on the Governor's extended state of emergency declaration through August 29 due to rising cases of COVID-19.

2. Will parents have the option to choose in-person attendance or virtual learning for their children and families?

Yes. We are responding to the requests of families to provide two learning options for the 2020-21 fall semester. Parents can choose a fully in-school learning option with daily in-class instruction or a fully virtual model with teacher-led instruction at home based on the needs of their child and the format they feel will best support his/her learning. We are asking parents to commit to a choice for the first semester in PowerSchool July 6-24 so we have adequate time to plan for all of the necessary supports students and families will need when the school year begins. If a parent does not make a choice by July 24, the student will

be enrolled in the in-school option for the fall. All parents will have an opportunity to re-evaluate their choices after the fall semester.

3. **Can parents change their fall learning option during the designated commitment period?**

   The period for choosing fall learning options in PowerSchool is July 6-24. Parents who wish to change their learning option before July 24 may call (901) 416-5300 M-F, 7a.m. – 7 p.m., to submit a change request in writing. Changes cannot be made directly in PowerSchool, and no changes can be made after the window closes on July 24.

4. **How will students make up for lost instruction due to school closures in the spring?**

   We will be offering optional Saturday learning academies throughout the year, as well as learning academies during Fall Break and Spring Break, to provide additional enrichment for our students.

5. **What will a typical day for a child who is attending virtually look like?**

   Students learning at home will participate in virtual classes throughout the regularly scheduled school day. Independent work and physical activity will be built into the daily schedule. Please view these sample schedules of a typical virtual learning day below.

6. **Will children be expected to sit for seven (7) consecutive hours on a computer to learn? How will their breaks be structured, particularly for younger students?**

   The typical school day will align with the required allotment of time for each content area, elective, and intervention period. Students will have the opportunity to participate in independent learning, along with guided instruction from the classroom teacher through the use of Microsoft TEAMS. Please view these sample schedules of a typical virtual learning day below.

7. **What is student cohorting?**

   Cohorting is the grouping of a certain number of students to stay together for the school day as a way to avoid the possible widespread of the virus that causes COVID-19. When reasonable and appropriate, schools will make every effort to limit the movement of students on elementary and middle school campuses. This means a group of students, a cohort, will be assigned to a classroom for the majority of the school day instead of the student traveling from classroom to classroom for special activities or other classes, and the teachers rotate from one classroom to another. Cohorting practices may vary from school to school.

8. **How many students will be included in a cohort?**

   Cohorts will be determined based on data results from our learning option commitments.

9. **Will middle and high schools change classes?**

   The District is working to reduce class transitions as much as possible to support social distancing guidelines in schools.

10. **What is the anticipated class size for in-school and virtual?**

    Class sizes will be determined based on data results from our learning option commitments.

11. **Will grading be the same for in-school and virtual learning?**

    Regardless of the type of learning environment provided to our students, teachers will continue to follow all grading protocols established in 2019-20. However, teachers will also ensure students receive credit for time spent using intervention software, such as iReady, Edgenuity or similar programs. Whenever a student completes at least 45 minutes on any day for ELA or Math, a 100 should be included as a class participation grade for the student in the relevant subject area for that day.

12. **Will virtual students receive a teacher from their assigned school, or will they receive any District teacher?**

    Students will receive in-person or virtual instruction from a teacher at their zoned/registered school.

13. **How will virtual students receive classroom materials/books/projects etc.?**

    Classroom materials will need to be scanned and uploaded into the virtual classroom for the student to access. In some cases, parents may need to make arrangements to pick up special texts or materials from the school for the student.

14. **What is the plan for hands-on courses, such as CCTE, labs and project-based learning?**

    Elective courses that require hands-on learning will receive the same attention as traditional courses. Educators will be asked to deliver instruction to their students virtually, assign tasks, provide feedback, and score individual projects and assignments.

15. **Will students enrolled in the virtual option still have access to arts instruction (visual, performing, etc.)?**

    Yes. The arts are an important part of the total learning experience, and creative and performing arts programs will still be offered virtually in the fall. Students will receive live instruction from teachers at their school and participate in teacher-led projects and activities. Families will receive more information from their schools about the availability of supplies, instruments, etc. that may be needed for virtual learning at home.

16. **What does Virtual learning look like for CLUE students and CLUE teachers in the Fall?**

    Students served in the CLUE environment will use the District-approved curriculum with enhanced and enriched, project-based supplemental curriculum guides and materials. If students are learning virtually, classes will be organized in the CLUE901 Google classrooms. Students will meet online with teachers and complete independent learning within the online space. All students with IEPs will be provided with services and accommodations that are agreed upon by the IEP team. Resources are available to parents, teachers and students at www.edugoodies.com.

17. **Will there be special accommodations for Pre-K?**

Pre-K students will engage in virtual learning that aligns with the scope of sequence for the Early Childhood Department. Supporting videos for parents will accompany instructional materials to ensure the academic, fine motor, and social-emotional needs are being met. For students with disabilities, Individualized Education Programs (IEP) will be implemented and accommodations will be made as appropriate.

18. **If there is an outbreak and schools have to close, what is the plan for continued instruction?**

In the event of an outbreak, students will continue to receive instruction from their assigned teacher of record virtually through the use of Microsoft TEAMS. Digital devices will be provided to students who do not have access to a device at home.

19. **Will schools offer before- and after-care programs?**

The District recognizes that before- and after-school care is important for working parents. So long as schools are open, regular before- and after-care programs will be offered.

20. **Will the District provide virtual educational options to exceptional children?**

Yes. Virtual educational options will be developed by each student's respective IEP team. Families of students who receive special education and CLUE services can call the Department of Exceptional Children's hotline, 901-416-5206, for questions about services and learning options M-F, 7 a.m. – 7 p.m., through July 24.

21. **Does Florida Virtual School (FLVS) have a curriculum for students with special needs?**

The Individual Education Program (IEP) will be implemented in the virtual setting. Students with disabilities who are on a regular diploma track and who take the TNReady Assessment will use a District-approved curriculum with accommodations. Students who take the Tennessee Department of Education (TDOE) Alternate Assessment will use a variety of instruction and intervention materials to meet their individualized needs. Life Skills Curriculum and specialized transition curriculum are also used to address the needs of students who take the TDOE Alternate Assessment. Students served in the CLUE environment will use the District approved curriculum with enhanced and enriched, project-based supplemental curriculum guides and materials. Resources are available to parents, teachers and students at www.edugoodies.com.

22. **How will pick-up and drop-off procedures be handled at schools?**

Parents should expect to hear directly from their principals about pick-up and drop-off procedures, as it will vary by campus. Parents should not expect to walk their students to class when school opens in order to allow for temperature checks and maintain social distancing in buildings. Staggered drop-off and dismissal schedules may also be implemented to reduce the volume of people on campus at one time.

23. **Will students eat breakfast and lunch together in the cafeteria?**

Convening a large number of students in cafeterias for the purposes of breakfast and lunch increases the risk of virus spread. Where possible, schools will continue to utilize the cafeteria for the consumption of student meals with modifications to ensure the health and safety of students. School lunch and breakfast procedures will vary by campus, but parents should expect some combination of grab and go meals, shorter lunch periods or lunches consumed in the student's classroom or outdoors.

24. Will after-school/extracurricular activities be offered?

Involvement in after-school/extracurricular activities is an important part of a student's school experience. However, when schools open, we must take all precautions to limit the potential spread of the virus, so group gatherings and activities will be limited. Guidelines and availability of certain activities may vary by school and program type, so parents should expect to hear from their principals about the available after-school/extracurricular offerings at their school. We are also exploring possible options for students enrolled in virtual learning to participate in extracurricular activities, staff permitting, with limited in-person interaction.

25. Will athletics be offered?

Middle and high schools that meet the District's readiness requirements are cleared to begin limited team conditioning Monday, July 20. Each school will determine the sports that will resume, and coaches will communicate directly with student athletes and families. All conditioning activities will prioritize the health and safety of our student athletes and coaches. Coaches and athletic staff have participated in required training based on CDC recommendations and guidelines from state and national health officials. Only outdoor workouts are allowed at this time, with a maximum of 50 total people in a single conditioning session. Student athletes will also stay in small groups - or "pods" - of 10 people max at all times. Additional protocols include daily health screenings, social distancing guidelines and required masks for player/coach interactions, among others.

26. Will students be required to wear uniforms in the fall?

Aside from the addition of wearing a face mask daily, dress codes have not changed for the 2020-21 school year. All students are required to follow the established school-based dress code for in-person and virtual learning. Parents may contact their school directly for questions about dress code requirements.

HEALTH & SAFETY

27. Will students be required to wear a mask in the fall?

Yes. Until there is a vaccine for COVID-19, face masks will be a part of our daily lives. Face masks will be required for students, staff and visitors in all buildings and on buses when school begins. Masks should be added to every family's back-to-school supply list, as it will be the responsibility of the parent to ensure students arrive at school each day with the necessary face mask. Mask requirements may change over time due to the latest guidance from health officials. *Please check with the Department of Exceptional Children and Health Services for guidance about students with respiratory problems and those who are incapacitated/unable to remove the mask without assistance or have sensory sensitivities.

28. What types of masks are acceptable for students?

Since facial coverings/masks are to serve as a barrier to prevent respiratory droplets from traveling into the

air and potentially onto other people, masks must be cloth or disposable. Cloth masks can be more cost effective because they can be cleaned regularly. Masks should not contain any inappropriate images or messages.

29. **Will students be denied entry in school or on the bus they are not wearing a mask?**

    Students are required to wear a mask; however, students without a mask will be provided one.

30. **How will social distancing be implemented in schools?**

    Schools will be utilizing all available classroom and learning spaces and making necessary modifications to help ensure social distancing to every extent possible. While social distancing may be challenging at times in smaller buildings or where there are very large student populations, additional safeguards will also be in place for all schools, such as daily health screenings, face masks for all students and staff and hand sanitizer access for all classes. Social distancing signage and floor decals will be displayed prominently throughout all schools and buildings. We will also be limiting interactions of classes and discouraging all group gatherings, as well as limiting visitor volume.

31. **What health and safety measures are being implemented on buses?**

    Students who ride a school bus will be required to wear a mask and will undergo temperature checks at the school each day. Buses will also be cleaned and disinfected between routes and at the end of each day. Based on the District's protocols for student bus transportation, parents must decide if they want their child to continue to ride the bus or find another option of transportation.

32. **Will the District be providing or requiring COVID-19 tests for students and staff?**

    No. We will not administer or require COVID-19 tests of students or employees. However, we will check temperatures and ensure that people inside our schools and office buildings are symptom-free. We will also strongly encourage all students and staff who are not feeling well to stay at home.

33. **How will parents be informed if a COVID-19 outbreak occurs at a school?**

    We will continue to work closely with the Shelby County Health Department to ensure we follow the proper guidance for responding to any potential cases of COVID-19 in our schools. We will be implementing safeguards, such as daily temperature checks, and creating isolation areas in all buildings for anyone displaying symptoms to help prevent the spread of illness. We will also strongly encourage all students and staff who are not feeling well to stay at home. In the event that a positive case is identified, families will be informed in a timely manner, including any possible Health Department guidance regarding precautionary testing that may be necessary. Parents should also be prepared for the possibility of an unexpected short-term school closures based on guidance from health officials.

DIGITAL ACCESS & SUPPORT

34. What if my child does not have a laptop and internet access?

As part of the District's 1:1 Digital Device Plan, we will be providing all SCS students with devices for the 2020-21 school year. The District will continue to survey families in need to determine eligibility for hotspot internet devices. Hotspot internet devices will be provided to approximately 25% of the total student population according to needs-based criteria.

35. When will devices be distributed?

We are preparing to begin device distribution before the end of July with a goal to complete by August 31. If we experience any unexpected delivery delays from our vendors, we will make temporary use of existing devices to ensure every student has digital access on day 1. Students with access to a personal device may also temporarily use their own until all of the new devices arrive. We will be sharing detailed distribution schedules in the coming weeks, with specific pick-up dates, times and locations for every school and grade level.

36. What type of device will my student receive?

Students enrolled in grades Pre-K-2 will receive Microsoft Surface Go tablet devices. Students enrolled in grades 3-8 will receive Microsoft Surface Go tablet devices with an attached keyboard. Students enrolled in grades 9-12 will receive HP laptop devices. If we experience any unexpected delivery delays from our vendors, we will make temporary use of existing devices to ensure every student has digital access on day 1.

37. How will students be trained on using the devices?

Students will receive continuous training, materials and video instruction regarding the responsible use of digital devices and platforms, online safety and Digital Citizenship tailored to each grade level. In addition, parents and students will receive Digital Device User Handbooks which detail device best practices, care, maintenance, and resources for internet safety.

38. Will there be training sessions for families to understand how to use devices and digital learning platforms?

Yes. We are hosting parent trainings to learn how to use Microsoft Teams, which is the District's preferred platform for virtual communication between teachers and schools. We will be adding more sessions for families throughout the summer and fall to better understand various digital learning programs, and we are also working to create a technology support hotline that parents will have access to throughout the school year.

39. Do the devices have content filtering to protect my child from harmful sites?

Yes, in compliance with the Children's Internet Protection Act, all issued devices and hotspots will be equipped with content filtering software blocking access to harmful online content.

40. Will the devices include monitoring/tracking software?

Laptop recovery and tracking software will be loaded to remotely locate and lock devices, as well as delete files.

41. What happens if my child's device is lost or stolen?

If the device is lost or stolen, parents must file a police report and provide the report to the school. A school

representative must be contacted within 24 hours after the occurrence.

42. What if the device is damaged?

All devices will come equipped with a durable case, intended to protect it from drops and spills. In the event that the device is damaged, parents will need to alert their student's school of the damage so that the device can be repaired or replaced. If the laptop is damaged because of negligence, parents may be responsible for the full replacement cost of the laptop. Do not attempt to disassemble or repair the device.

43. FLVS (Florida Virtual School) has experienced major data and security issues. How will the District keep data secure?

SCS will be offering FLVS courses through our secure Learning Management System (Canvas). FLVS will provide course content and will not have access to our student data.