CONTINUITY OF LEARNING PLAN
2023-2024

HARFORD COUNTY
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

BOARD OF EDUCATION OF HARFORD COUNTY

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Information accurate as of July 24. 2023.

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PREFACE

Harford County Public Schools (HCPS) is excited to share our instructional plan for the 2023-2024 school year. We will offer in-person instruction five days per week, operate in the traditional 180-day school calendar, and have traditional access for visitors, public events, and community use of our facilities.

HCPS has set goals and priorities related to recovery from impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

HCPS continues to implement and monitor mitigation measures based upon the guidance and recommendations of the CDC, Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), and the Harford County Health Department (HCHD). As further guidance is provided, our procedures may change; however, at this time, this information reflects our current practices. Updates will be posted as necessary/appropriate to www.HCPS.org.

Harford County Public Schools faculty and staff are excited to engage all HCPS students throughout the 2023-2024 school year.

GOALS

1 Goal One

Prepare every student for success in postsecondary education and career.

- Equity
- Learning Options
- Swan Creek Program Evaluation
- Academics
- Curriculum
- Assessing and Addressing Learning Gaps

- Special Needs
- English Learners
- Attendance
- Athletics
- Quarantine Learning Plan
- Connections to Blueprint for Maryland's Future

2 Goal Two

Engage families and the community to be partners in the education of our students.

- Stakeholder Feedback
- Stakeholder Feedback Analysis
- Stakeholder Communication Data
- Ongoing Review to the HCPS Continuity of Learning Plan
- HCPS Online COVID-19 Resources

3 Goal Three

Hire and support highly effective staff who are committed to building their own professional capacity in order to increase student achievement.

- Employee Benefits
- Staff Wellness Efforts
- Connections to Blueprint for Maryland's Future

4 Goal Four

Provide safe, secure, and healthy learning environments that are conducive to effective teaching and learning, creativity, and innovation.

- Mental Health
- Health and Safety Decision Making
- Health and Safety Protocols
- COVID-19 Health Response Plans

- Outbreak Response Decision Making
- Transportation
- Connections to Blueprint for Maryland's Future

GOAL ONE

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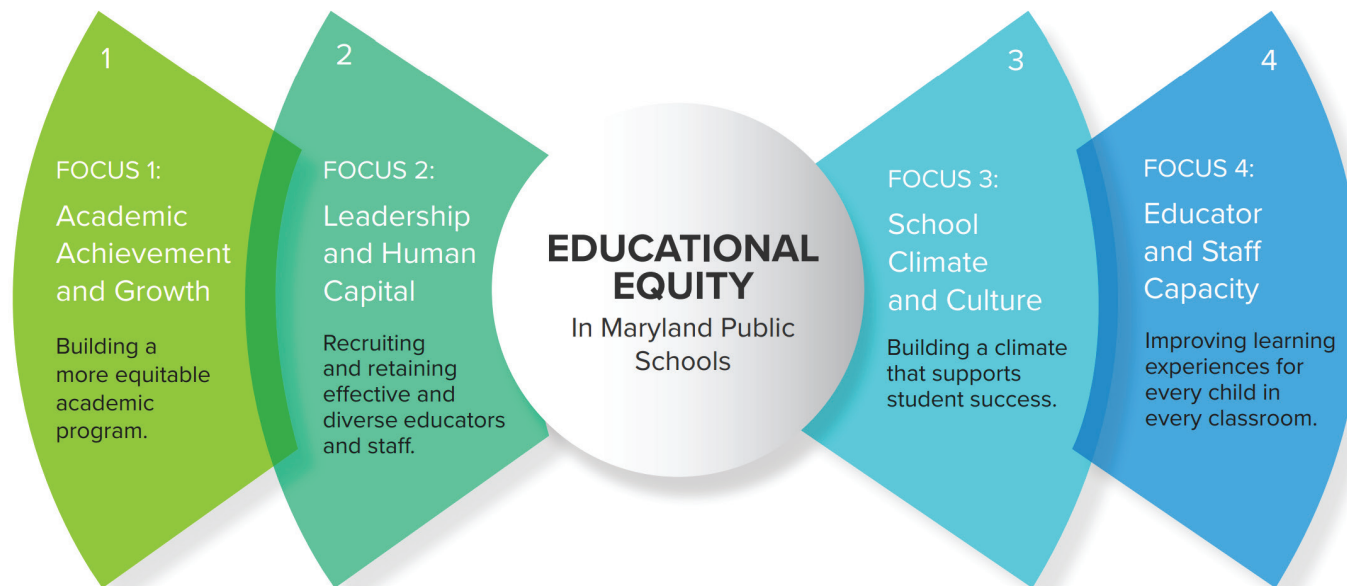**HARFORD COUNTY**
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

BOARD OF EDUCATION

EQUITY

HCPS believes every student will attain academic and personal success in a safe and caring environment that honors the diversity of our students and staff. HCPS aligns every program, practice, decision, or action to provide educational equity. HCPS provides students and their families with a differentiated approach to access resources, so students achieve personalized success. Our actions are aligned with the four equity focus areas identified by MSDE.

As a school system, HCPS is aware that there are health and educational disparities that exist for various populations of our county. As such, we have worked with the HCHD, University of Maryland Upper Chesapeake Medical Center, and other community organizations to ensure that we are making available and communicating educational opportunities, testing availability, and vaccine availability. We know that in our county, specifically, transportation is an issue for many of our families. Therefore, we have provided both vaccination and testing at our school locations both during the school day and after school. In addition, we continue to provide families with information on the availability of vaccinations at other locations around the county as they become available. We continue to reference and monitor the CDC's guidance on addressing and identifying these disparities here: **https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/disparities/action.htm.**

HCPS Policy on Educational Equity
HCPS Procedure on Educational Equity

FOCUS 1:

Academic Achievement and Growth

Building a more equitable academic program.

FOCUS 2:

Leadership and Human Capital

Recruiting and retaining effective and diverse educators and staff.

EDUCATIONAL EQUITY
In Maryland Public Schools

FOCUS 3:

School Climate and Culture

Building a climate that supports student success.

FOCUS 4:

Educator and Staff Capacity

Improving learning experiences for every child in every classroom.

LEARNING OPTIONS

Full, In-Person Classroom Learning

In-person teaching and learning will occur in all 55 HCPS schools.

Magnet, signature, and specialized regional programs will operate as normal.

Swan Creek School Blended Virtual eLearning Program

The blended virtual elearning program can accommodate students in grades 2-12 including students with disabilities.

Classroom learning is conducted virtually.

Students will:

• access HCPS curriculum daily

• access HCPS teachers daily

• access accommodations and supports as identified in an individualized learning plan

• follow the daily bell schedule

• attend a virtual morning meeting, where teachers will mark their attendance

Click here to learn more about Swan Creek School!

All HCPS students will access their classroom teacher(s) and the approved curriculum and follow the daily bell schedule every school day during the 2023-2024 school year. HCPS attendance procedures are in place for both in-person and virtual eLearning students. Students with chronic absenteeism and/or tardiness will be referred to the HCPS Student Services Department so that causes may be considered and remedies applied to improve attendance.

Stakeholder feedback indicates that a virtual option is important to some families and that some students can be very successful with this option. In response to feedback, HCPS is holding enrollment for the 2023-2024 school year for only grades 2-12. HCPS also created a fit assessment for families to understand if their students have the characteristics and supports that will lead to a successful experience. Click here to view the Swan Creek School application process.

SWAN CREEK PROGRAM EVALUATION

In the spring of 2021, the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) approved the Swan Creek School virtual learning program. On August 24, 2021, MSDE shared information, at the State Board of Education meeting, related to the monitoring of approved virtual learning program in Maryland for 2021-2022 school year. During the meeting, MSDE provided an overview of the monitoring steps it will take to ensure student success through access to equitable and quality virtual programs at Local School Systems (LSS). The steps outlined in the evaluation plan by HCPS, to monitor the implementation and the impact of the virtual learning programs at Swan Creek School, are in alignment with the steps taken by MSDE. The implementation and findings of this program evaluation plan will provide answers to the MSDE "Look Fors" LSS in Virtual Programs.

The Office of Research and Program Evaluation collaborated with the principals and staff at the Swan Creek School and district leadership to design a mixed-methods evaluation framework HCPS will use to monitor the implementation and the impact of the Blended Virtual Learning Program at Swan Creek School. This collaboration entails leveraging multiple methodologies to ensure a comprehensive evaluation of the Swan Creek School's Blended Virtual Learning Program, including survey research, qualitative research (e.g., stakeholder focus groups), and quantitative research (e.g., student data analyses), and a comprehensive capstone report. The goal of HCPS, in monitoring the implementation and the impact of the virtual learning programs at Swan Creek School, is to ensure that all students will have: a) Access to full range of enriched programs and opportunities in the online learning environment b) Equitable supports that will enhance their learning and success c) The same level of rigorous and comparable teaching and learning offered to face-to-face students.

The following are available to the public for review regarding the Swan Creek Program Evaluation:

- Checklist: Virtual Learning Program Fit Assessment
- Pre-Survey Report: Perception of Parents, Students, and Staff Regarding the Blended Virtual Learning Program
- Qualitative Research (stakeholder focus groups) - Coming Soon
- Quantitative Research (student data analyses) - Coming Soon
- **Comprehensive Capstone Report**

SCS BAYHAWKS

SWAN CREEK PROGRAM EVALUATION, cont.

Recommendation 1:

Offer individualized support to students struggling academically at Swan Creek.

In the 2021-22 school year, the rates of Swan Creek elementary and middle school students with more than one failing grade in a core content area were at times double those of all HCPS students and selected peer HCPS schools. By monitoring Swan Creek's rates of students with one failing grade - or near-failing grade - and providing appropriate support, HCPS may be able to reduce the discrepancy between Swan Creek and it's peer schools.

Recommendation 2:

Determine the reasons for reading struggles for Swan Creek kindergarten students.

Kindergarten students at Swan Creek demonstrate a significantly higher risk of developing reading difficulties than students at peer HCPS schools. Data from the 2021-22 administrations of the DIBELS assessment indicate Kindergarten students were as likely to demonstrate reading difficulties as their peer HCPS school or some HCPS Kindergarten students. Further research into best practices for early childhood literacy skills and development in the blended virtual learning environment will help improve performance.

Recommendation 3:

Create more opportunities for in-person student social interaction and engagement.

Concerns over students' social-emotional well-being have increased since the pre-survey administration in Fall 2021. Across multiple survey questions, students, parents, and staff all express the need for additional social engagement between students, both through increased virtual student collaboration and in-person activities.

ACADEMICS

Students' academic needs and goals are met through a variety of supports and strategies. These supports and strategies include participation in the normal, in-person academic school day with peers, under the teaching and guidance of highly qualified, caring teachers and other staff; as well as additional options for targeted instructional support as needed. Each school has a multi-tiered system of support in place to provide targeted instructional support through offerings such as interventions and tutoring that are designed to meet each student's needs as identified through assessment data or other means. In addition to school day supports, after-school tutoring and other after-school student programs are available. These interventions, supports, and other programs work in alignment with the HCPS Equity Policy to support our goal that each child has access to the educational rigor, resources, and support that lead to academic success. As such, an equity lens is used to disaggregate data to identify students for after-school tutoring and other instructional support programs.

Systemic reading and mathematics assessments provide data and information to guide teachers' instructional decisions and programmatic plans for students each school year. Students participate in beginning, middle, and end of year assessments following the **HCPS Assessment Calendar**. Local assessments include SNAP, DIBELS, Reading Inventory and Mathematics Inventory. These data help to inform system, school, and classroom improvement efforts. Fall baseline data is used in decisions for interventions for students in targeted student groups. HCPS continues to work towards the goal of increasing proficiency levels to meet or exceed historic data outcomes prior to the COVID-19 Pandemic. In addition to the systemic assessments, teachers will use formative assessment measures in their classrooms aligned to the Maryland College and Career Ready Standards. Progress monitoring of individual goals and objectives for students who receive special education occurs. HCPS participates in the Maryland Assessment Program, as required each year by the Maryland State Department of Education. **See Appendix A.**

In addition to the in-person option for students, HCPS launched Swan Creek School Blended Virtual eLearning Program in August of 2020. Families with students in Grades 2 – 12 have the option of enrolling their student(s) in the blended virtual program. Students in Grades 6 – 12 also have the option of an in-person blended Virtual Program. HCPS considers all enrollment requests on an individual basis. The goal of Swan Creek School is to provide flexible options for students to meet academic success in a rigorous and nurturing environment.

CURRICULUM

All curriculum utilized in Harford County Public Schools is aligned to the **Maryland College and Career Ready Standards**, is grounded in the **PreK-12 Frameworks**, and is created, housed, and accessed in Canvas which serves as our Learning Management System. By utilizing Canvas across all content areas and grade levels, teachers, students, and families are able to access digital curricular materials, resources, and tools. These digital resources are available to students who may be under quarantine and/or isolation which allows them to maintain their educational experience consistent with their peers. Canvas provides a consistent platform for teachers to create, assign, and assess instructional tasks for students. The platform also allows teachers to maintain two-way communication and provide feedback to students. HCPS curriculum is reviewed regularly with an accessibility and equity lens to ensure that learning experiences and materials are equitable, diverse, and inclusive. HCPS curricular reviews occur consistently through the work of Content Offices, Curriculum Writers, the HCPS General Curriculum Committee, the Equity Task Force, and others.

Pacing

Every curriculum guide includes a Year-at-a-Glance pacing schedule to assist teachers in planning instruction and addressing students' unfinished learning. HCPS teachers are expected to maintain a consistent content and pacing for all courses to ensure alignment across the school system.

Instructional Delivery Model

As the school system continues to recover from the COVID-19 Pandemic and ensure all students have the academic skills necessary to succeed in college and career, addressing possible student learning loss is a top priority. Therefore, HCPS is working towards a consistent implementation of a system-wide instructional schedule which allows for personalized learning opportunities for students. These personalized opportunities include the instructional supports of interventions and tutoring, as well as summer credit recovery programs, dual enrollment opportunities that include college courses taught by local community college instructors in HCPS buildings during the school day, expanded dual credit options such as workforce certification courses, and the infusion as well as evaluation of our North Star Graduate Outcomes into additional content areas.

HCPS believes that the best intervention is a highly qualified, caring teacher implementing a quality curriculum aligned to the national, state, and local standards. Teachers are empowered to meet the needs of their students using data informed teaching practices and differentiated instruction and grouping strategies. Teachers are provided with regular professional development throughout the school year connected to their content area in order to have the skills and knowledge necessary to implement the programs with fidelity and make flexible choices as appropriate for their individual students.

Stakeholder feedback: Our students and families expressed support and interest in expanding FEV Tutoring, which has been extended to provide SAT support.

CURRICULUM, cont.

In addition to teacher directed instruction, the HCPS Instructional Program supports student learning and achievement through accelerated and remediation programs such as Academic Tutoring, **Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 12 academic Summer Learning Opportunities**, and Academic Recovery.

HCPS has partnered with FEV Tutor to provide a variety of tutoring services for all students in grades 3-12. These services are available to students 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Students can receive tutoring sessions in all major content areas. Schools and Central Office can monitor the platform, review tutoring sessions, and access progress reports. Tutoring services include:

- On-Demand Homework Help-students access the FEV Tutor platform after school hours and request help with homework assignments. This is best used when a student is stuck on a particular question or topic.

- Scheduled Sessions-students/families request recurring tutoring sessions in a specific content area. Students can sign up for multiple sessions per week in the same content area or in multiple content areas. This is best used for recurring weekly sessions focused on a particular subject area.

- High Dosage During the School Day Tutoring-students are recommended for tutoring sessions during the school day based on state and local performance data.

- SAT Prep-students sign up for specific sessions that focus on SAT preparation.

Elementary and middle school students are identified and recommended for summer school based on teacher and administrator recommendation as well as intervention data and grades. Title one priority students are given access to registration three weeks prior to open enrollment and non-title I priority students are given access two weeks prior to open enrollment. Families are notified of their eligibility and registration instructions directly from their child's school. Elementary Summer Learning Program lessons and assignments are tiered in order to support students as they worked towards grade-level standards. This approach allows small groups of students to build confidence as well as necessary background knowledge and skills to mitigate pandemic related learning loss. Middle School Summer Learning Program lessons and assignments focused on building students' Reading, Mathematics, and Social Emotional skills to move them towards grade-level readiness. High School Summer Learning Programs are designed to allow students to recover academic credits that were not obtained during the school year in English, Mathematics, Science, and Social Science courses to ensure students are on track for graduation and have the necessary content knowledge to access the next most rigorous course in their sequence.

CURRICULUM, cont.

Professional Learning

HCPS believes that on-going professional learning is critical to the continuing growth of all staff which leads to student success. HCPS is committed to providing time, content, and resources for systemic, school-based, and personalized professional learning. The following examples are representative rather than exhaustive of the professional learning areas provided districtwide during pre-service days, student early dismissal days, and systemic professional learning days:

- English Language Learner Identification and Services
- Spanish for Communication I and II
- Content specific workshops for non-tenured teachers to support effective lesson planning and address student unfinished learning
- Using the Canvas Learning Management System to support delivery of accessible, rigorous instruction and resources for all students
- Content specific workshops for all general and special education teachers to build content knowledge and pedagogical skills
- Differentiating curriculum for English Language Learners in the content classroom
- Data analysis and school improvement
- Equity and cultural proficiency

Stakeholder feedback: HCPS has reviewed use of half-days for professional learning after completing a stakeholder focus group series on elementary planning time.
View the focus group report here.

ASSESSING AND ADDRESSING LEARNING GAPS

Assessing Learning Gaps

- Systemic reading and mathematics assessments are administered to students in order to provide information to teachers in regards to students' strengths and areas for growth.
- Content Supervisors and Coordinators work with teachers to determine appropriate assessments to identify student learning gaps and how to address any gaps. This may occur through formative assessment strategies such as observations of students, virtual representations, student feedback, summaries, self-assessment, or short quizzes, and by analyzing information gathered through progress monitoring of individualized learning plans.
- In many courses, students complete an online benchmark, unit, topic, or performance-based assessment that informs the teacher of the student's mastery of the standards measured.
- Principals, counselors, and teachers monitor student attendance and performance on State and local assessments and classroom measures. Students identified as needing support are discussed at Student Support Team meetings and a plan to intervene is developed. Data reviewed at these meetings is disaggregated by race, service group, and gender.
- 2023-2024 HCPS Assessment Calendar
- Appendix A

Grading and Reporting

- Students are graded on their work and teachers provide direct and timely feedback to students.
- Home Access Center (HAC) is utilized to monitor student progress and to publish report cards at the end of each quarter for all students in grades K-12. PreK students receive a report card via email.
- Grades are reported as directed in the HCPS Board of Education policy entitled Report Cards and Marking System.

Interventions

- Students who need further instructional supports may participate in an approved intervention program. School teams have access to an electronic database of all current available interventions to make the most appropriate decisions to support individual student learning. The database includes information to help teams match student need, based on grade level, content area, goal area, etc. to the most relevant intervention(s).

ASSESSING AND ADDRESSING LEARNING GAPS, cont.

Academic Tutoring

- HCPS offers academic tutoring for students who have been identified as needing additional academic support and for students and families who are seeking additional support. Academic tutoring is available during the school year and summer. FEV Tutor was selected for a variety of factors including the number of languages in which they are able to offer tutoring services, as well as their accessibility rating. FEV Tutor is also able to provide tutoring in all content areas including the highest levels of secondary Mathematics courses.

Early Warning Indicators

- HCPS has launched a dashboard for school leaders that both meets the requirement for the Blueprint for Maryland's Future "on track" measurement for ninth grade students and aligns with the HCPS NorthStar graduate outcome goals. This dashboard is titled, Early Warning Indicators, and will be used to analyze and support student growth in the area of credit alignment, attendance, and grade point average. New for the 2023-2024 school year is the launch of the sixth grade early warning indicator. HCPS Blueprint teams are looking to create dashboards for additional grade bands to further measure our students' progress.

Pictures shown for sample, demonstrative purposes.

SPECIAL NEEDS

HCPS is committed to providing the highest level of education and support to ensure that students with disabilities have equal access to the same opportunities as their non-disabled peers, including the provision of a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE).

All schools follow the IDEA, Section 504, and the Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Specific, detailed guidance, aligned with technical assistance from MSDE, is provided to all stakeholders and is used in professional learning sessions. Practitioners receive differentiated professional development and individualized support and coaching from a highly qualified team of instructional and behavioral specialists.

In partnership with the Special Education Citizens Advisory Council (SECAC), HCPS Special Education teachers and staff foster collaborative partnerships with families to proactively plan for and respond to the individual needs of students with disabilities.

HCPS Individualized Education Program (IEP) teams:

- deliver high quality specially designed instruction and implement the special education services, accommodations, and supports reflected in each student's IEP;
- review the appropriateness of the IEP, and revise as necessary, to ensure that each student has access to the general education curriculum and is able to make progress in light of their circumstances;
- monitor student progress and review/revise the IEP when monitoring indicates a lack of expected progress and/or regression; and
- use a data driven decision-making process to address the need for compensatory education/recovery services when a loss of FAPE has occurred.

HCPS believes that the obligation to provide FAPE requires the highest level of thoughtfulness, purposeful planning, and collaboration. IEP teams use a student-centered, data driven approach to ensure access to the general education curriculum, and to develop and implement IEPs across a continuum of service delivery models. If data indicates that a student has new, additional, or different needs as a result of an extended school closure and changing service delivery models, HCPS IEP teams respond by amending/revising the IEP to address the unique needs of the student.

Special educators, general educators, and related service providers utilize face-to-face instruction to deliver specially designed instruction in accordance with the frequency, duration, and location in each IEP. Social, emotional, and behavioral needs of students are addressed through a collaborative, multi-disciplinary approach which is supported by a variety of trained practitioners including school-based school psychologists, school counselors, and social workers. Special Education Coordinators, Teacher Specialists, Board Certified Behavior Analysts, Assistive Technology Specialists, and Transition Resource Itinerants provide additional, targeted support to meet the unique needs of each student.

SPECIAL NEEDS, cont.

With the access to one-to-one technology devices, and in collaboration with the HCPS Office of Technology, the HCPS Curriculum Department and the HCPS Department of Special Education, implemented the Tools for All Project. This includes the Texthelp Read/Write© Toolbar and EquatIO© Mathspaces support access to the general education curriculum for all students and reduces learning gaps for students who require specially designed instruction. This on-demand resource is available and functions as an interoperability tool with the HCPS Learner Management System, Canvas. Targeted groups also have access to specialized online tools such as Bookshare, IXL©, TeachTown Basics©, TeachTown Social Skills©, OG STAR, Edmark, and MECA® Career Exploration and Assessment System.

Through thoughtful planning, preparation, and on-going communication with each family, IEP teams make individualized determinations about the implementation of special education supports and services. Individual determinations emphasize maximizing opportunities for students with disabilities to learn and make progress alongside their non-disabled peers, and to participate in the school community.

Implementation of 504 Services

HCPS ensures that all students qualifying for services under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 have access to instructional models and resources. All students with a 504 Plan have access to in-person instruction, technology tools and resources, as well as behavioral tools and strategies per the student's individual 504 plan. At the onset of the academic year, instructional staff will receive copies of 504 plans for their assigned students. School-based staff communicate with families of students with a 504 Plan how equal access to instruction will be provided.

HCPS has purchased and onboarded a new 504 database so all 504 Plans can be accessed by staff at the school level and central office staff virtually. This will provide better access for staff and enhance the services provided to students.

ENGLISH LEARNERS

In an effort to ensure high-quality instruction for our EL students, HCPS has enacted the following procedures to meet the needs of this diverse population of students:

- Every HCPS school has an assigned EL teacher who is responsible for providing direct services to eligible students who are identified as English Learners.

- All students who have indicated on their Maryland Home Language Survey (two or more of the three questions) a language other than English are eligible to be screened to determine if they qualify for EL services.

- The EL teachers administer the World-class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) Diagnostic Language Assessment for all eligible students. The assessment determines the students' level of English proficiency in reading, writing, speaking, and listening.

- Along with a proficiency rating, teachers utilize WIDA guidelines to establish "can do" statements. These statements encapsulate what the student "can do" within the English language. These statements are shared with each of the student's teachers so that they are aware of the specific strengths and weaknesses of the student.

- The EL teacher works collaboratively with the classroom teacher to provide support in different aspects of the student's instruction including but not limited to planning, work modification, work accommodation, and assessment.

- EL teachers meet regularly with each student on their caseload to work with them on English-specific structures, rules, models, and nuances.

EL teachers serve as a conduit for the student. They work on behalf of the student to share progress with families and teachers as well as assist students, teachers, and families with accessing outside/community support and resources.

Partnership with a wide variety of organizations have been established to further support the unique needs of our EL students. Organizations such as LASOS, Talking Points, CTS Language Link, and CANVAS continue to aid our students and families. Within the classroom setting, EL students are afforded the opportunity to use additional tools and resources such as CANVAS platform enhancements (immersive reader and translation tools), small group EL instruction through Microsoft Teams, RAZ Kids Learning A-Z bilingual links to literature, working to translate documents and training videos into Spanish, or include Spanish subtitles, as well as consistent access to ELL teachers.

ATTENDANCE

- HCPS uses a Student Information System (SIS) for attendance tracking purposes.
- HCPS has established an effective and accurate method of monitoring attendance, which includes the following components:
  - Student attendance is recorded in the SIS providing for complete and accurate reporting of attendance to Harford County Public Schools and the Maryland State Department of Education.
  - The SIS will provide information on a daily, weekly, and monthly basis that can be used to identify students with problematic attendance and tardiness patterns so corrective measures may be put into place.
  - Students with chronic absenteeism and/or tardiness will be reported to the HCPS Department of Student Services so that causes may be considered and remedies applied to improve attendance. In these cases, school counselors, school nurses, social workers, and pupil personnel workers will take action to reengage students into the academic program. These efforts can include phone calls, emails, letters home, one-on-one counseling sessions, incentives for attendance, home visits, referrals to mental health supports, modified schedules, changes to class schedules, changes in school placement, and changes to existing transportation. If none of these efforts have a positive impact, in some cases referrals will be made to Truancy Court or District Court.
  - Parents will be notified in writing when a student has accumulated 5, 10, and 15 absences in a school year. Additional notification and actions will occur as needed.

Swan Creek Virtual eLearning Program

- Daily attendance in Swan Creek Virtual eLearning Program will be tracked and monitored.
- Students working virtually are required to attend a virtual morning meeting, where teachers will mark their attendance.

Temporary Virtual Instruction Due to COVID-19 Pandemic

- If a school is moved to temporary virtual instruction for any reason, daily attendance can be tracked and through a Virtual Attendance, a web application created by the HCPS Office of Technology and Information Systems. The decisions about use of the Virtual Attendance App will be made based on the circumstances of the school closure or virtual instruction day.
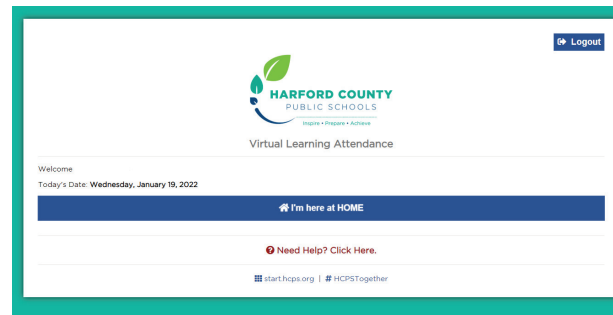
ATTENDANCE, cont.
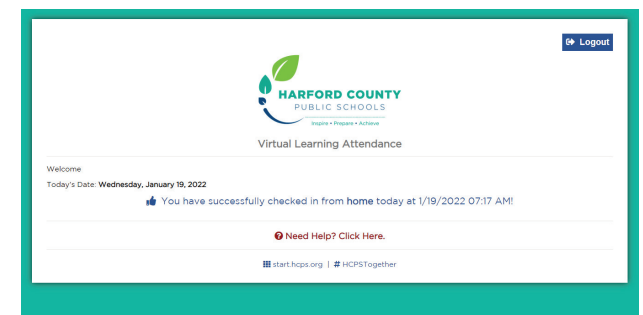
What does the Temporary Virtual Attendance app look like?

Step One
Students will be asked to login to the Virtual Attendance app each day to record their attendance status.

Step Two
Students will select the blue "I'm here at HOME" button to acknowledge that they are present for the day.

Step Three
The Virtual Attendance app will provide a confirmation noting that the student has successfully checked in for the day.

INCLEMENT WEATHER PLAN

Based on stakeholder feedback, HCPS had utilized the technology and planning experience of the COVID-19 pandemic to offer three virtual inclement weather day, approved by MSDE.

Virtual Day Instruction Plan Elements

Devices and Access to Wi-Fi

- Every HCPS student has been issued an iPad, Chromebook, or Windows device.
- In addition, mobile hot spots available if required.

Accommodations

- Consideration for accommodations required to access asynchronous virtual lessons will be made on an individual basis. Individual students with disabilities may be provided with asynchronous virtual lessons and/or instructional materials to address the unique needs of the student.

Communication

- In the event of utilizing an asynchronous option on an inclement weather day:
  - Mass communication system phone call, email, and text message
  - Posted on hcps.org
  - Shared on HCPS social media accounts
  - Information provided to media partners
  - Inclement weather webpage created with logistics
  - MSDE Virtual Day Instruction Plan Application

Attendance

- Students will initially be marked "present" in Teacher Access Center.
- Teachers will update the attendance information for any student that does not complete the virtual assignments in the 3-day window.

Additional Factors

- Students will be provided 3 days from the day that is designated as a virtual instruction day to complete assignments.
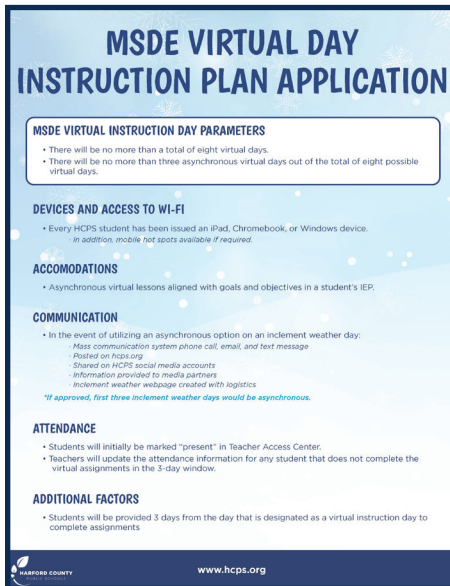
INCLEMENT WEATHER PLAN, cont.

Asynchronous Instruction on Inclement Weather Days - FAQ

Asynchronous Inclement Weather Day FAQs have been created to support both HCPS families and staff with information about asynchronous instruction and expectations for the work day. These documents are housed on our website on the **Inclement Weather & School Closings page.** Inquiries related to this topic will be monitored and the FAQs will be updated as needed.

- **Inclement Weather Days FAQ - for Parents and Guardians**
- **Inclement Weather Days FAQ - for HCPS Staff**

ATHLETICS

HCPS participates and follows the guidelines of the Maryland Public Secondary Schools Athletic Association (MPSSA) Athletic Program.

Participation Requirements:

Middle School Athletics:

• Complete Registration through HCPS Online Forms.

• Pre-participation Physical Examination Forms:

    a. 2023-2024: Participants must submit a physical examination dated within 365 days of the start of the season. Physicals must be dated after June 7th.

    b. Must be completed by a physician or authorized health care provider.

• Proof of Health Insurance or Accident Insurance:

    a. All students must have an accident insurance policy that will cover the sport in which they wish to participate before they may take part in the sport for either practice or games.

    b. If insurance is needed, reasonably priced policies may be purchased through an independent carrier provided by the school system. Information on the purchase of school health/accident insurance may be obtained at your school office or at this website: **Student Accident Insurance.** Additional access to health/accident insurance can also be found at **Medical Assistance Information – Maryland.**

• Eligibility Requirements: Participants must meet the eligibility requirements of no failing grades on the quarterly report.

ATHLETICS, cont.

High School Athletics:

- Complete Registration on FORM RELEAF
- Pre-participation Physical Examination Forms:
  - a. Participants must submit a physical examination dated after June 7th for the school year of desired participation.
  - b. Must be completed by a physician or authorized health care provider.

- Proof of Health Insurance or Accident Insurance:
  - a. All students must have an accident insurance policy that will cover the sport in which they wish to participate before they may take part in the sport for either practice or games.
  - b. If insurance is needed, reasonably priced policies may be purchased through an independent carrier provided by the school system. Information on the purchase of school health/accident insurance may be obtained at your school office or at this website: **Student Accident Insurance.** Additional access to health/accident insurance can also be found at **Medical Assistance Information – Maryland.**

- Participation Fee: Waived for the 2022-2023 school year.
- Eligibility Requirements: Participants must meet the eligibility requirements of no failing grades on the quarterly report card.

For more details go to the 2022-2023 Administrative Regulations and Procedures Handbook for Interscholastic Athletics on the athletics page at hcps.org.

Spectators:

- Wear a mask based on your personal preference, informed by your personal level of risk.
- Washing hands regularly and/or using hand sanitizer frequently is recommended.
- GoFan, a digital ticketing platform will be used for all athletic events taking place in HCPS schools.
- Passes for the 2022-2023 school year will be available for sale through GoFan.
  - A ten admissions pass at a cost of $30.00 will be available for purchase by community members. This

Stakeholder feedback indicates that athletics is a top priority for many families.

ATHLETICS, cont.

ticket is good for regular season events at any HCPS school location.

- A year-long admission pass will be available for purchase by HCPS high school students at a cost of $20.00. This pass is good for all regular season games at the student's home school. Each high school student will be able to purchase one of these passes during the 2022-2023 school year.
- Concessions are allowed at inside and outside events.

Transportation:

- Bus transportation will be provided for athletic events.
- HCPS Alternative Transportation Form may be utilized by students. Please refer to the **Administrative Regulations and Procedures Handbook for Interscholastic Athletics** for outlined procedures on the use of the HCPS Alternative Transportation Form.

QUARANTINE LEARNING PLAN

The information below outlines what families can expect regarding access to instruction if a student needs to be excluded from school due to COVID illness or COVID quarantine or isolation.

Communication:

- Nurses and school administration will communicate with students, parents/caregivers, and teachers regarding quarantine. If a student is quarantined/isolated, access to technology and/or learning materials work will be provided by teachers to the students and parents/caregivers to allow for flexibility and personalized content.

Learning Continuity:

- All teachers use the HCPS Learning Management System, Canvas, with students. Each teacher maintains their Canvas course pages with learning resources aligned with their curriculum. When students are quarantined or otherwise absent from school, they are able to access resources, which may include asynchronous learning, through Canvas. Students are able to utilize resources, submit completed work, and communicate with their teacher(s) through Canvas.

- Students and families of students who are not in attendance for any reason or length of time are encouraged to reach out to their teachers regarding expectations and opportunities for support. Attendance is closely monitored by school personnel to support the sustained and regular attendance of all.

- When a student receiving special education services is required by HCPS to quarantine, the case manager and/or related service provider will contact the parent/guardian to coordinate service delivery through an alternate instructional/service delivery model. HCPS staff will ensure that instructional materials (i.e. packets, recorded lessons, virtual instruction, and/or lessons posted on Canvas Learning Management System) are accessible to students. The impact of extended absences due to quarantine will be addressed on an individual basis by the student's IEP team.

A full list of quarantine resources is available on www.hcps.org.

QUARANTINE LEARNING PLAN, cont.

Academic Tutoring:

- HCPS is pleased to offer a robust academic tutoring program, which continues to expand to ensure each student and/or family who requests this service has timely access. This tutoring is free of cost to HCPS students and is offered through the Canvas platform with FEV Tutor.

  FEV Tutor sessions are available in the following areas:

Grade Levels	Grades 3-12
Courses Covered	All **English/Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Science** courses in grades 3-12. *Including higher level course work*
Format	**Virtual**-voice or chat-no live video conferencing Available 24 hours a day 7 days a week Available in 40 languages Program Options: **1:1 Drop-In Homework Help**-This is best used when a student is stuck on a particular question or topic. **Scheduled Weekly Sessions**-This is best used for recurring weekly sessions focused on a particular subject area.

With the expansion of the tutoring program to include FEV Tutor, not only are additional tutors available, but additional secondary courses are available including upper-level Mathematics courses. In addition, FEV Tutor is able to provide tutoring services in a variety of languages.*

*This enhancement is a direct result of stakeholder feedback.

QUARANTINE LEARNING PLAN, cont.

Staff Available for Instruction:

- The Harford County Public Library (HCPL) also offers free online tutoring. Further details for HCPL resources can be found here: **https://hcplonline.org/schoolsupportcentral.php** and families can watch a **Parent Academy Real Talk video** featuring HCPL CEO Mary Hastler.

Technology Support:

- Students may take home HCPS devices each evening and during quarantine and have online access to *Canvas Learning Management System*.
- Families may reach out to school administration if there are concerns regarding access to online materials.
- **Family Technology Supports**

CONNECTIONS TO BLUEPRINT FOR MARYLAND'S FUTURE

The Blueprint for Maryland's Future mandates ways to support students both due to the COVID-19 pandemic and to address academic achievement of HCPS students. The following is informative of the work in these areas that aligns with Continuity of Learning:

- A one-page overview of the Blueprint work related to college and career readiness can be found **here**
- **Report on Summer School Implementation Plan**
- Report to MSDE on Technology Spending submitted
- District implemented "on track" measure for ninth grade students progress towards graduation
- **Focus Group Analysis Report**
- **Early Warning Indicators (Including Blueprint 9th Grade On-track and 6th Grade)**
- **North Star Blueprint Update: Early Warning Indicator Tool**
- **HCPS Students Participating in Dual Enrollment Courses at HCC Receive Free Tuition**
- **Tutoring Report to the AIB – December 2022**
- High-quality instruction: **Reading Pilot**
                                  Reading Focus Group
- **Blueprint Implementation Plan**
- **Blueprint Milestone Report**

BLUEPRINT
for our students' future

GOAL TWO

Engage families and the community to be partners in the education of our students.

- Stakeholder Feedback
- Stakeholder Feedback Analysis
- Stakeholder Communication Data
- Ongoing Review to the HCPS Continuity of Learning Plan
- HCPS Online COVID-19 Resources

HARFORD COUNTY
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

BOARD OF EDUCATION

STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

The following teams, focus groups, surveys, and communication methods were used to collect stakeholder feedback. Representative membership on these various groups include executive leadership, school administration, central office staff, teachers, instructional and operational support staff, employee bargaining unit representatives, parents, students, local community partners, and concerned citizens.

COVID-19 Related Teams

- COVID-19 Mitigation Task Force
- COVID-19 Outbreak Team

North Star Groups

- North Star Executive Leadership
- Dual Enrollment Operational Team
  - Courses and Program Offerings
  - Data Exchange
  - Student Supports
- Middle School
- Early Childhood and Primary Grades
  (ad-hoc committee of GCC)
- Blueprint North Star Sub Committee

Digital Teaching and Learning Teams

- Strategic Leadership and Communication
- Content and Professional Learning
- Access and Delivery
- Program Evaluation
- Learning Management System Evaluation Committee

Work Teams

- Operational Principal Advisory Group
- Equity
- Childcare
- Intention
- Cleaning Protocols for Shared Materials
- Student Health Protocols
- Athletics - Return to Play
- Online Options/Parent Choice
- PreK - 1
- Elementary Schedule and Logistics
- Secondary Schedules and Logistics
- Friday Development Team
- Critical Content Maps/Pacing
- Summer Learning
- Summer Camp
- Credit Recovery
- Extended School Year (ESY)
- Professional Learning
- Teacher of the Year Finalist Groups
- Parent Advisory Council

Equity Task Force

Superintendent's Student Advisory Council

Focus Groups

- Evaluating the Experience of ALL Stakeholders During COVID-19
- Blueprint for Maryland's Future for Central Leaders, School Stakeholders
- Elementary Planning Time
- How to Measure Reading

Surveys

- Digital Learning and COVID-19 Survey *(14,042 responses)*
- Survey on Racism, Implicit Bias, and Other Forms of Discrimination *(3,947 responses)*
- School Reopening: Intentions Surveys *(19,334 responses)*
- 2021-2022 Budget Input Survey *(2,124 responses)*
- Educator Survey on Student Engagement *(1,721 responses)*
- Student Engagement Survey *(11,825 responses)*
- ESSER II Grant Survey *(4,500+ responses)*
- HCPS Inclement Weather Survey *(7,952+ responses)*
- Continuity of Learning Innovations: Advancements from the COVID-19 Pandemic *(42 responses)*
- Blueprint Implementation Survey *(215 responses)*

Community Input Statistics

- 1,694 phone calls/emails received *(July 2022-June 2023)*
- 347 Board of Education meeting public comments *(July 2022-June 2023)*

STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK, cont.

Parents/Guardians, students, staff, and the greater community have the opportunity to provide feedback in the form of public comment at each of the Board of Education of Harford County's public business meetings. Continuity of Learning was a standing Board of Education agenda item at all meetings for the 2021-2022 school year. To review public business meeting content, visit the **HCPS Live Stream and Streaming Media Archive**.

The Office of Research and Program Evaluation

The Office of Research and Program Evaluation provides information and analyses to support continuous improvement in the academic and operational services at HCPS. The following reports are informative for revisions and decision-making for the Continuity of Learning Plan:

- **Continuity of Learning Innovations: Advancements from the COVID-19 Pandemic**
- **Safety, Security, and Crisis Preparedness**
- **Blueprint Feedback Analysis**
- **North Star Study: Analysis of the North Star Graduate Outcomes in Harford County Public Schools**
- **North Star Study: The Potential Outcomes of the Harford County Public Schools North Star Initiative**
- **Student Engagement Analysis**
- **Focus Group Key Findings and recommendations: Evaluating the Experience of HCPS Stakeholders During COVID-19**
- **Inclement Weather Response Report**
- **Student Engagement Analysis**
- **Customer Satisfaction Survey Analysis**
- **Budget Survey Analysis**
- **Digital Learning Survey**
- **Racism, Implicit Bias, and Other Forms of Discrimination Survey**

Ways to submit feedback beyond these groups listed

- Email: AskHCPS@hcps.org
- Public Comment at Board of Education meetings
- **Staff COVID-19 Resources**

STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK ANALYSIS

Student Engagement Analysis

In the spring of 2021, Harford County Public Schools (HCPS) sought to understand the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral engagement of students in the virtual and/or hybrid learning environments necessitated by COVID-19. To this end, HCPS administered a survey to students in Grades 3-12, all teachers, as well as school and central office staff to identify engaging practices and to analyze responses to the survey's closed- and open-ended questions.

This analysis supports HCPS in identifying best practices to engage future virtual learners and develop guidance for virtual and/or hybrid programs that may be developed at the county and/or state level.

This report answers the following research questions:

1. What feedback do students have about their engagement during virtual or hybrid instruction?
2. What strategies did educators use in virtual or hybrid instruction that had a positive impact on students' cognitive, emotional, and behavioral engagement?
3. What did educators find challenging about engaging students (cognitively, emotionally, behaviorally) during virtual or hybrid instruction?
4. What digital tools/resources did respondents include in their open-ended responses? (For manually coded responses, only)

View:

1. **Final Research Report**
2. **Elementary Schools: Closed-Ended Responses**
3. **Middle Schools: Closed-Ended Responses**
4. **High Schools: Closed-Ended Responses**
5. **Educator Survey on Student Engagement: Closed-Ended Responses**

STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK ANALYSIS, cont.

Evaluating the Experience of HCPS Stakeholders During COVID-19

In January 2021, HCPS conducted virtual focus groups about COVID-19 and the 2020-21 school year with the goal of understanding what went well with district operations during the pandemic, lessons learned, and priorities for planning for the return to in-person learning. The Superintendent of Schools, Sean Bulson, and his leadership team used a focus group method to bring together virtually a demographically diverse group of stakeholders to participate in a guided discussion on the implementation of educational programs, services, or concepts. The HCPS facilitators or moderators led a 30-90-minute discussion within the groups to gather helpful information and feedback. The HCPS focus groups were administered separately to teachers, principals, central office staff, students, and parents. Members of these focus groups discussed topics related to virtual and hybrid instruction, special education, Learning Support Centers, and other key topics.

The HCPS Office of Research and Program Evaluation worked with focus group facilitators, HCPS staff and external researchers to review and synthesize the meeting minutes from the focus groups, summaries of survey results and follow-up surveys, and raw survey data for educators (teachers, principals), central office staff, students and parents. As part of this review and analysis, the researchers and the team identified key themes the District can use to evaluate and improve district operations, teaching and learning, and its Continuity of Learning Plan.

The following research questions guided the analysis of the focus group information and data:

1. What did HCPS do well during the COVID-19 pandemic?

2. What do stakeholders perceive as the lessons during COVID-19?

3. What do HCPS stakeholders perceive as the needs related to return to in-person learning?

This report presents key findings and recommendations from the analyses of the data, and information received from the focus groups stakeholders

Recommendations:

The findings included in this report support the following five (5) recommendations to help improve teaching and learning for all students, the effectiveness of district operations, and the HCPS Continuity of Learning Plan.

I. Share the focus group feedback with the community to share what went well, lessons learned and to highlight how HCPS will address the areas of need identified by all the focus group members.

II. Continue to identify evidence-based practices and/or successful instructional strategies used by peer school districts to inform the HCPS district's reopening and Continuity of Learning Plan.

III. Continue providing virtual options for students moving into next year and beyond.

IV. Consider permanent implementation of some of the best practices used during COVID-19 operations.

V. HCPS leadership must continue to seek a balance between consistency and flexibility in certain circumstances.

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Continuity of Learning Innovations

Harford County Public Schools (HCPS) seeks to identify innovative ideas across the district that occurred as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic constructive changes for students, staff, and families. To conduct this research, the HCPS Office of Strategic Initiatives collaborated with the HCPS Office of Research and Program Evaluation. The Office of Strategic Initiatives conducted interviews with several staff members and stakeholders and collected data on the innovations. The goal was to analyze which ideas and adaptations are most important to stakeholders and which innovations meet the Board of Education Strategic Plan Goals. The analysis will be used as a tool to highlight innovations that stakeholders found to be effective during COVID-19 recovery and may play an important role in meeting future strategic goals, including those outlined in the Blueprint for Maryland's Future. Results will be shared with staff and all stakeholders via the Continuity of Learning Plan, HCPS website, and any other venue where organizational change or strategic planning is being discussed. This report details the results of that analysis.

Research Questions
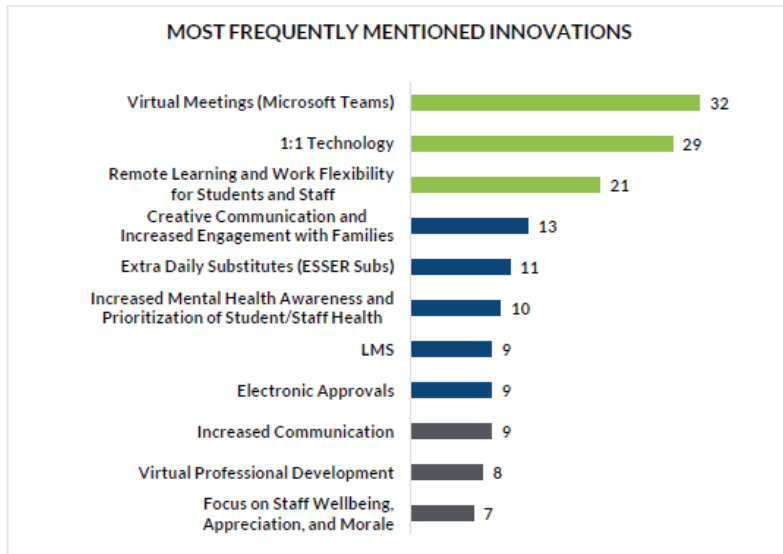
According to interview participants:

- What innovations, adaptations, and changes occurred as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic that had a positive impact on students, staff, and families?
- What HCPS Strategic Plan Goals do the identified innovations, adaptations, and changes relate to and support?
- How important do stakeholders feel these innovations are to their role and to supporting HCPS's goals, and in what ways?
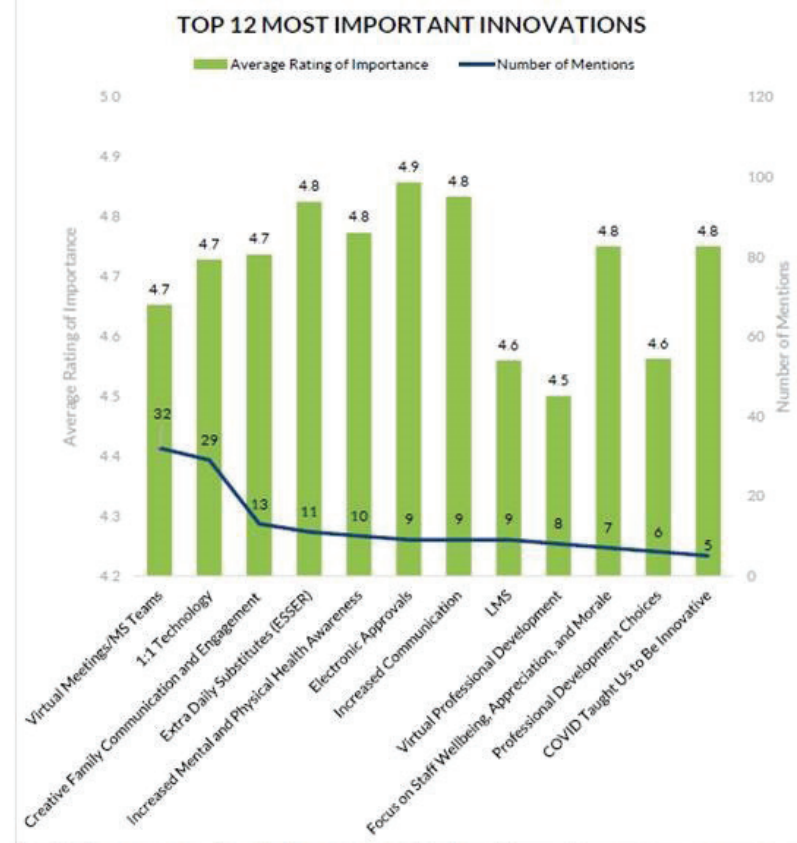
Recommendations

Based on the findings of this report, HCPS should consider implementing the following recommendations:

I. Invest in the expansion, formalization, and further integration of technology initiatives in the district beyond the pandemic. Many staff members at all levels named innovations such as 1:1 technology, virtual meetings, remote learning, and remote work opportunities as particularly impactful and good candidates for sustainment beyond the pandemic. All four of those innovations were cited by multiple respondents as supportive and directly aligned to all four of HCPS' strategic goals.

II. Explore more permanent funding strategies to keep extra daily substitute teachers at school sites. Stakeholders appreciated the addition of extra substitutes teachers funded by Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER) and believe the change supports all four of HCPS' strategic goals—particularly in building staff capacity and healthy learning environments.

III. Codify HCPS' commitment to prioritizing student and staff health and wellbeing. Throughout COVID-19, stakeholders recognized the district's increased prioritization and awareness of the importance of mental and physical health. Staff members believe that providing and maintaining resources for stakeholder wellbeing will further support the district's progress towards its strategic goals.

IV. Continue to explore opportunities to increase planning time for teachers. Throughout COVID-19, teachers utilized their planning time to provide individualized support to students, to plan lessons and to provide outreach supports to families. Many teachers said that the dedicated time and space were good for their own wellbeing.
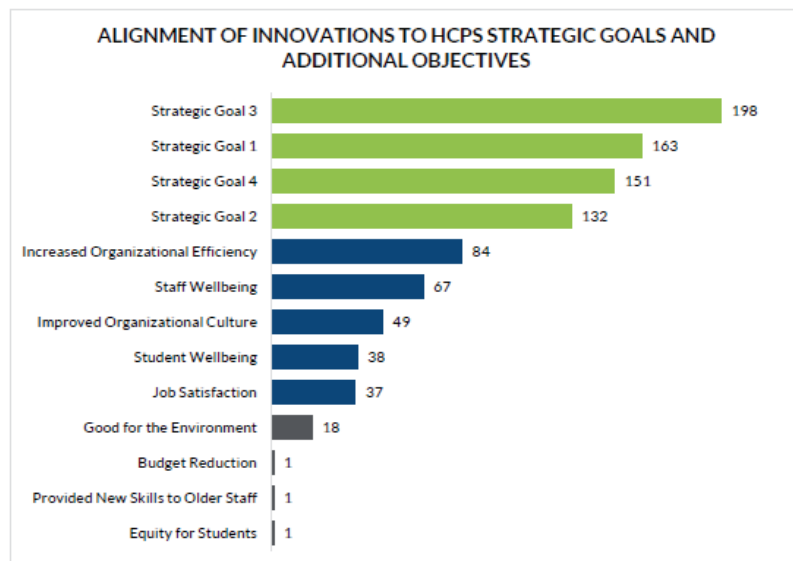
STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK ANALYSIS, cont.

MOST FREQUENTLY MENTIONED INNOVATIONS

Innovation	Count
Virtual Meetings (Microsoft Teams)	32
1:1 Technology	29
Remote Learning and Work Flexibility for Students and Staff	21
Creative Communication and Increased Engagement with Families	13
Extra Daily Substitutes (ESSER Subs)	11
Increased Mental Health Awareness and Prioritization of Student/Staff Health	10
LMS	9
Electronic Approvals	9
Increased Communication	9
Virtual Professional Development	8
Focus on Staff Wellbeing, Appreciation, and Morale	7

Note: This figure indicates the top eleven counts that mention a particular innovation of the 306 responses from the modified dataset with unique *Respondent–Innovation* pairs.

ALIGNMENT OF INNOVATIONS TO HCPS STRATEGIC GOALS AND ADDITIONAL OBJECTIVES

Objective	Count
Strategic Goal 3	198
Strategic Goal 1	163
Strategic Goal 4	151
Strategic Goal 2	132
Increased Organizational Efficiency	84
Staff Wellbeing	67
Improved Organizational Culture	49
Student Wellbeing	38
Job Satisfaction	37
Good for the Environment	18
Budget Reduction	1
Provided New Skills to Older Staff	1
Equity for Students	1

Note: This figure indicates the counts of strategic goal alignment and additional objectives across the 942 responses from the original dataset with *Respondent–Innovation–Strategic Goal Alignment* pairs.

TOP 12 MOST IMPORTANT INNOVATIONS

Legend: Average Rating of Importance — Number of Mentions

Innovation	Average Rating of Importance	Number of Mentions
Virtual Meetings/MS Teams	4.7	32
1:1 Technology	4.7	29
Creative Family Communication and Engagement	4.7	13
Extra Daily Substitutes (ESSER)	4.8	11
Increased Mental and Physical Health Awareness	4.8	10
Electronic Approvals	4.9	9
Increased Communication	4.8	9
LMS	4.6	9
Virtual Professional Development	4.5	8
Focus on Staff Wellbeing, Appreciation, and Morale	4.8	7
Professional Development Choices	4.6	6
COVID Taught Us to Be Innovative	4.8	5

Note: This figure contains data from both the original and modified datasets. The green data series represents mean ratings of importance across the 942 responses from the original dataset with *Respondent–Innovation–Strategic Goal Alignment* responses. The blue data series represents the count of innovations mentioned across the 306 responses from the modified dataset with unique *Respondent–Innovation* pairs. This figure is presented in descending order by number of mentions.

STAKEHOLDER COMMUNICATION DATA

The following data is collected as a part of the Harford County Public Schools customer service initiative. Data is received via email at AskHCPS@hcps.org and by phone.

July 2022 - June 2023

1,659 total communications

Topics of interest include:

COVID-19/Quarantine
17 total communications

Curriculum
96 total communications

HR/Employment
245 total communications

School Concerns
553 total communications

Technology
114 total communications

Other
403 total communications

ONGOING REVIEW TO THE HCPS CONTINUITY OF LEARNING PLAN

HCPS values the input and perspective of various stakeholders in various aspects of decision-making and operational design. Utilizing a variety of stakeholder feedback platforms, the most recent revisions to the Continuity of Learning (COL) and the ESSER III Budget Narrative were formed.

Through the data collected from stakeholders and the outlined procedures, mitigation is an active and ongoing effort. Review of CDC, Maryland State, and local health department guidance is taking place consistently and change being facilitated as guidance changes. HCPS is consulting with internal and external stakeholder groups including: a COVID-19 Mitigation Task Force, Business Advisory Committee, Parent Advisory Council, Board of Education of Harford County, Community School Specialists, recovery focus groups, return to in-person learning taskforce, principal advisory groups, and senior leadership to make revisions and changes. Communication of the changes will include but are not limited to (a) operational status infographics, (b) updates to the COL, (c) board meetings (d) Superintendent's Bulletins, (e) staff newsletters, (f) updated virtual professional development, and (g) direct communication to parents and guardians via phone, email, and text messages. "Continuity of Learning" was a standing item on all 2021-2022 Board of Education business meetings.

Review and revision of the Continuity of Learning will occur on a bi-annual basis as mandated by the Maryland State Department of Education.

Continuity of Learning Review

- HCPS Board of Education
- Superintendent of Schools
- Chief of Administration
- Director of Strategic Initiatives
- Innovation Specialists
- Executive Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment
- Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment
- Assistant Superintendent of Operations
- Executive Director of Facilities
- Supervisor of English Language Leaners and World Language
- Director of Special Education
- Coordinator of Special Education
- Coordinator of Supplemental Instruction
- Executive Director of Student Service

- Director of Health and Wellness
- Supervisor of Health Services
- Supervisor of Athletics
- Director of Transportation
- Senior Leadership Team
- Executive Leadership Team
- Administrative Leadership Team
- Instructional Leadership Team
- Operational Principals Team
- Teacher of the Year Teams
- Community Advisory Groups
- Blueprint for Maryland Future Committees
- COVID-19 Mitigation Task Force
- COVID-19 Outbreak Team

HCPS ONLINE COVID-19 RESOURCES

HCPS created an online resource for high priority COVID-19 resources which contain pertinent information most requested/accessed by parents/guardians, students, staff, and the greater community. These resources are updated, as new information arises.

Important Community Metrics:

- HCPS relies on external metrics for decision-making and have made these sources easily accessible for the HCPS community. The HCPS website features the Harford County Public Health Department's metrics link, the CDC Community Levels Tool link, and a link to the Maryland school outbreak tracker through the Maryland Department of Health.

Quarantine Resources:

- Academic Tutoring: HCPS is pleased to offer a robust academic tutoring program, which continues to expand to ensure each student and/or family who requests this service has timely access. This tutoring is free of cost to HCPS students and is offered through the Canvas platform with FEV Tutor.

- Mental Health and Wellness Supports

All questions related to COVID-19 can be sent to AskHCPS@hcps.org.

To access the above information, visit www.hcps.org/covidresources/
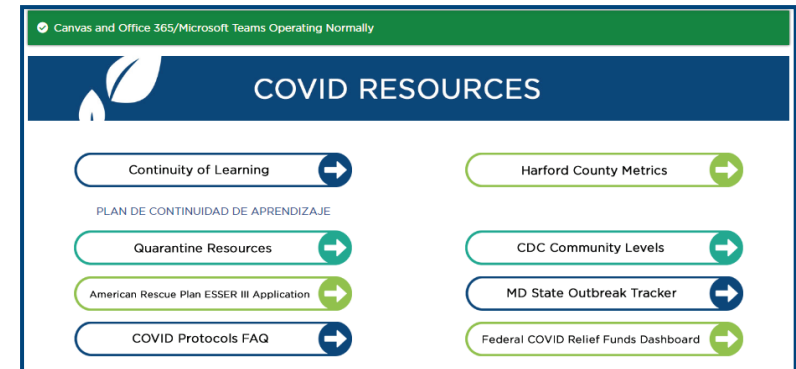

Stakeholder feedback indicates that online, easily accessible, and easily understood COVID-19 information specific to HCPS is a priority.

GOAL THREE

Hire and support highly effective staff who are committed to building their own professional capacity in order to increase student achievement.

• Employee Benefits

• Staff Wellness Efforts

• Connections to Blueprint for Maryland's Future

HARFORD COUNTY
PUBLIC SCHOOLS
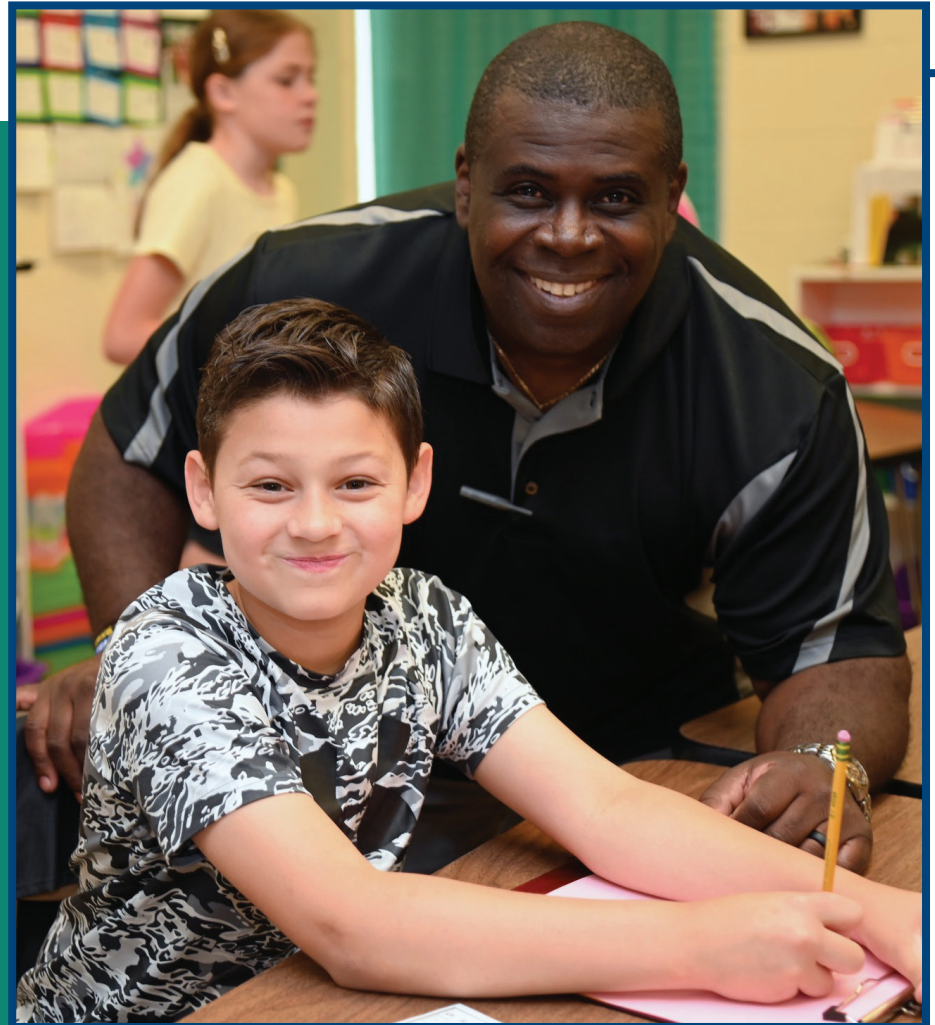
BOARD OF EDUCATION

EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

The Board of Education of Harford County recognizes the power of highly skilled employees in every position in the school system toward maximizing student achievement. It is the responsibility of the school system to recruit, hire, and retain the best personnel available, and to provide all staff with high quality, job-embedded professional development.

The Board of Education of Harford County does not discriminate on the basis of age, ancestry/national origin, color, disability, pregnancy, gender identity/expression, marital status, race, religion, sex or sexual orientation in matters affecting employment or in providing access to programs and activities and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups.

In accordance with the requirements of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (20 U.S.C. §1681, et seq.), Harford County Public Schools does not discriminate on the basis of sex in any of its programs or activities or with regard to employment. Inquiries about the application of Title IX, and its implementing regulations to Harford County Public Schools may be referred to Renee McGlothlin, Harford County Public Schools Title IX Coordinator, by mail to 102 S. Hickory Avenue, Bel Air, Maryland 21014, or by telephone to 410-809-6087 or by email to Renee.McGlothlin@hcps.org or the Assistant Secretary for the Office of Civil Rights in the United States Department of Education by mail to 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20202 or by telephone 1-800-421-3481, or both.

Group Health, Life, Dental, and Vision Insurance:

- Currently, the Board of Education pays up to 95% (BlueChoice HMO) of the premium for health coverage selected by employees and 90% of the premium for dental coverage options. Employees may select from three health insurance programs: an HMO plan and two PPO plans. We also offer two dental plan options and one vision plan option. Employees enrolled in any HCPS medical plan are provided prescription coverage with their medical plan.

   A voluntary Term Life plan is offered to all permanent benefit eligible employees. Employees may choose one times their salary, rounded to the nearest thousand, for Basic Life with Accidental Death and Dismemberment (AD&D) insurance. Additionally, employees may choose one to six times their salary, rounded for the nearest thousand, for Supplemental Life insurance. Currently, the Board of Education pays 90% of the premium for Basic Life with AD&D insurance, and the employee is responsible for 100% of the premium for Supplemental Life insurance.

Employee Assistance Program:

- HCPS provides an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) to all employees which is administered by Acentra Health. Sometimes personal and family problems can have a direct impact on personal well being and work performance. Getting timely, professional help can result in a healthier, more productive individual. HCPS recognize the value in assisting employees to find the best possible help in a timely manner.

EMPLOYEE BENEFITS, cont.

Retirement:

- Harford County Public Schools participates in the Maryland State Teachers/Employees Pension System. Membership is mandatory for all permanent employees working at least 500 budgeted hours per fiscal year. The pension system is contributory and employees are required to contribute 7% of their annual salary towards their membership.

Deferred Compensation Plans:

- The Board of Education provides a selection of Traditional tax-deferred or Roth after-tax contribution (457B & 403B) plans for all employees through Lincoln Financial Group.

Additional Benefits:

- Family Bereavement
- Personal Business Leave
- Sick Leave
- Tax-Advantaged Flexible Spending Accounts
- Tuition Reimbursement
- Employee Discount Programs
- Professional Liability Insurance
- Paid Time Off to include sick leave, personal business, and annual leave for 12-month employees
- Military Leave, Jury Duty/Subpoena Leave
- Sick Leave Bank
- Voluntary Summer Savings Program for 10-Month Employees

STAFF WELLNESS EFFORTS

CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield has partnered with Sharecare, Inc. to bring Harford County Public Schools employees a wellness program called CareFirst Wellbeing, that puts the power of health directly in employee's hands. Employees can access program tools, resources, and personalized recommendations anytime: **https://www.hcps.org/staff/wellness.aspx**

COVID-19 Support for Employees:

For employees who experience covid exposure, symptoms, or confirmed positive test result, the Human Resources Case Manager provides the following support:

- Relays current guidance, per MDH guidelines and HCPS policies, as it pertains to best practices for managing COVID-19 exposures, identifying symptoms, and timelines for ending isolation or quarantine
- Assists employees who may require FMLA with next steps
- Provides community or resource referrals if needed. Examples: Where to go to get COVID-19 testing, where to get home tests/masks, etc.

CONNECTIONS TO BLUEPRINT FOR MARYLAND'S FUTURE

The Blueprint for Maryland's Future mandates ways to improve workforce sustainability and elevating the teaching profession, which also is an imperative aspect of Learning Continuity for HCPS students. The following is informative of the work in this area that aligns with Continuity of Learning:

- A one-page overview of the Blueprint work related to recruitment and retention of teachers can be found **here**.
- Career Ladder salary increase for National Board-Certified teachers
- **Talent Pathways:** This five-year strategic initiative aims to support all HCPS hard-to-fill positions, including teachers, special educators, paraeducators, early childhood professionals, mental health professionals, related service providers, nurses, custodians, bus drivers/attendants, facilities workers, technology, and food and nutrition employees.
- **Equity Policy and Procedure:** The Educational Equity Policy states that "The school system shall use an equity lens in all staff recruiting, hiring, retention, and promotion processes" and the Educational Equity Procedure supports that policy through targeted action items.
- **Focus Group Analysis Report**
- **Blueprint Implementation Plan**

BLUEPRINT
for our students' future

GOAL FOUR

Provide safe, secure, and healthy learning environments that are conducive to effective teaching and learning, creativity, and innovation.

- Mental Health
- Health and Safety Decision Making
- Health and Safety Protocols
- COVID-19 Health Response Plans
- Outbreak Response Decision Making
- Transportation
- Connections to Blueprint for Maryland's Future

HARFORD COUNTY
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

BOARD OF EDUCATION
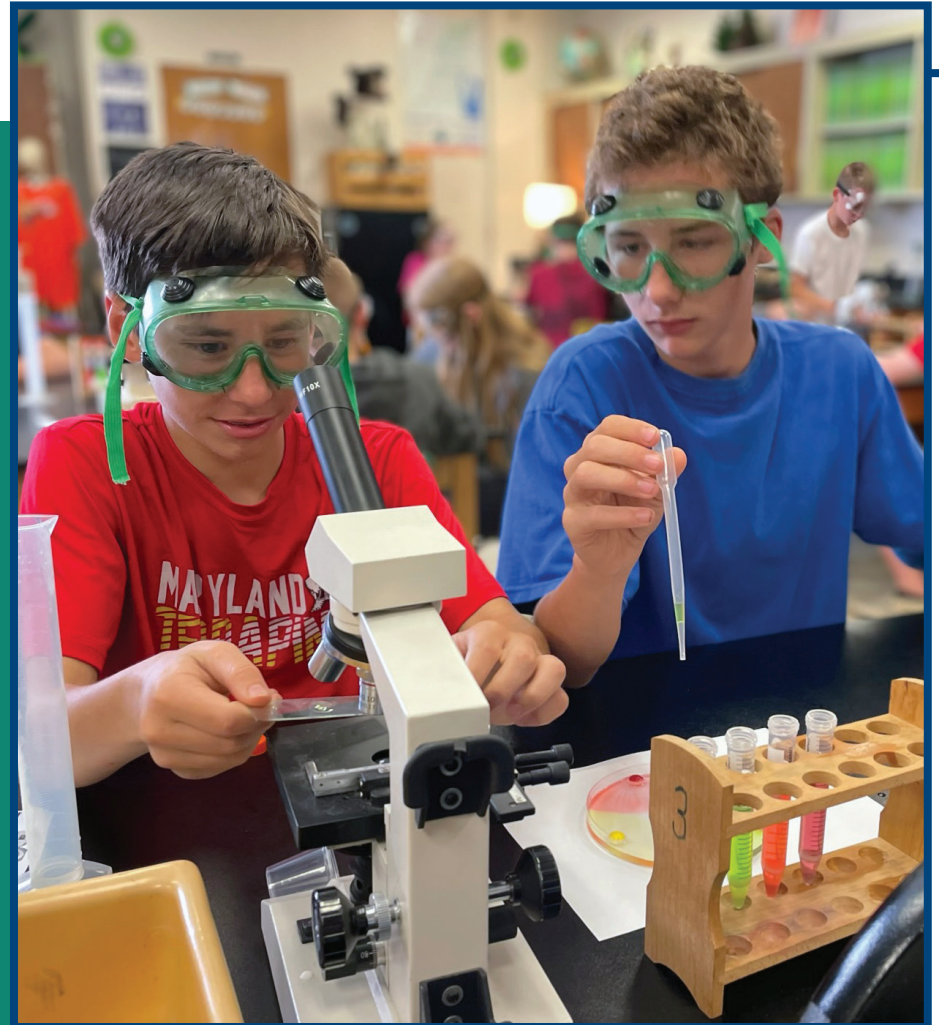
MENTAL HEALTH

School counselors will utilize a newly designed needs assessment that addresses both physical and mental health indicators. This addresses the needs of our students on a more systemic level and assists with the creation of a health initiative as part of our School Performance plans at every school. This tool provides additional data on the needs of our students across the system to identify and implement the appropriate Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3 interventions that will provide the physical and mental health support needed for our students.

Additionally, students have access to individual counseling; group counseling; wellness checks for students with acute health needs; home visits, phone calls, and letters to guardians of disengaged students; classroom counseling lessons; and face-to-face testing. An important part of our success in this area is the Student Support Teams (SST). School staff continue to use this process to identify individual student needs and design the appropriate interventions to be implemented throughout the school year. The Office of Health Services has completed the Child Anxiety Learning Modules (CALM) study to enhance the capacity of school nurses to reduce excessive anxiety in students. This initiative aligns with our North Star goals of producing Healthy and Employable students.

Student Mental Health

HCPS Student Support Services Staff will:

- Provide purposeful strategies and activities to support students as they return to in-person learning
- Work to ensure that students have increased access to mental health supports and resources through our school-based staff and community partnerships.
- Provide support to students, including a vast resource of activities that support the social/emotional health of students, which is accessible to parents/guardians, students, and staff virtually.
- Provide specially designed instruction and support the implementation of accommodations and behavioral supports to address the unique needs of students with disabilities.
- Refer to Care Solace, a new service described on next page.

Employee Health

HCPS Student Support Services Staff will:

- Support staff mental health via emotional recovery activities.
- Provide resources, such as our **HCPS Virtual Calming Room**, located at start.hcps.org, which have been developed to provide ongoing tools for our staff, students, and families.
- Refer to Care Solace, a new service described on next page.

MENTAL HEALTH, cont.

Care Solace

In conjunction with the Harford County Health Department, HCPS has now partnered with Care Solace, a mental health care coordination service. This free resource is available for HCPS students, staff, and their families through June 2024. Services provided by Care Solace include:

- Mental Health Support
- Substance Abuse Treatment

Care Solace is available 24 hours per day, seven days per week, in multiple languages. Users may connect to care services regardless of their insurance coverage.

This service and robust resource is a result of stakeholder feedback and partnership with the Health Department strengthened due to COVID-19 collaborative governance.

- **HCPS Staff Wellness Resources**
- **Parent Academy Real Talk: Care Solace Mental Health Resource**
- **Care Solace**

MENTAL HEALTH, cont.

Wellness Needs Assessment

During the 2022-2023 school year, Wellness Needs Assessments were given to 26,000+ students in grades 1-12 to develop interventions to support the presenting needs of all students and to provide a multi-tiered system of support. During the 2023-2024 school year, the Wellness Needs Assessment will include the mental and physical needs assessment.

Research Questions

This analysis of open-ended questions addressed the following research questions:

- Beyond the closed-ended options provided (e.g., stress, anger), what additional factors do students most often report having difficulty managing?

- Beyond the closed-ended options provided (e.g., lack of stable/reliable housing, incarcerated family member), with what additional factors do students most often report wanting help?

- What are the most frequently mentioned additional concerns and needs students name regarding their wellness?

- In what ways do the findings for the first three research questions differ by school level (i.e., middle versus high school)?

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this report, HCPS should consider the following recommendations:

I. Integrate response themes into next year's Wellness Needs Assessments.

II. Share this report with HCPS Department of Student Support Services staff to encourage discussions about the results.

III. Create a work group to identify patterns correlating with operational data monitored by HCPS, such as violence and discipline, and conduct a quantitative examination. Additionally, an HCPS work group could also examine the concentration of student-reported needs by school and/or feeder pattern.
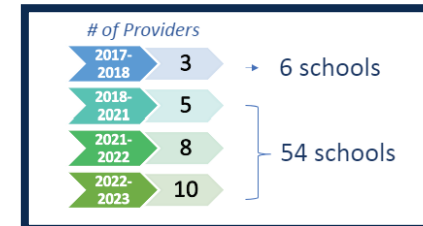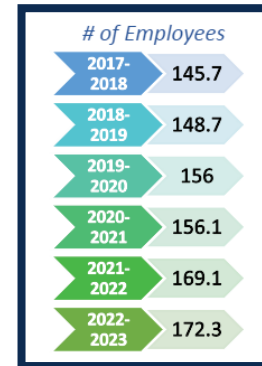
MENTAL HEALTH, cont.

Student Supports

- HCPS employed counselors, social workers, psychologists, and mental health specialists
- Private mental health providers in schools districtwide, serving around 1,000 students
- Care Solace

of Employees

Year	# of Employees
2017-2018	145.7
2018-2019	148.7
2019-2020	156
2020-2021	156.1
2021-2022	169.1
2022-2023	172.3

of Providers

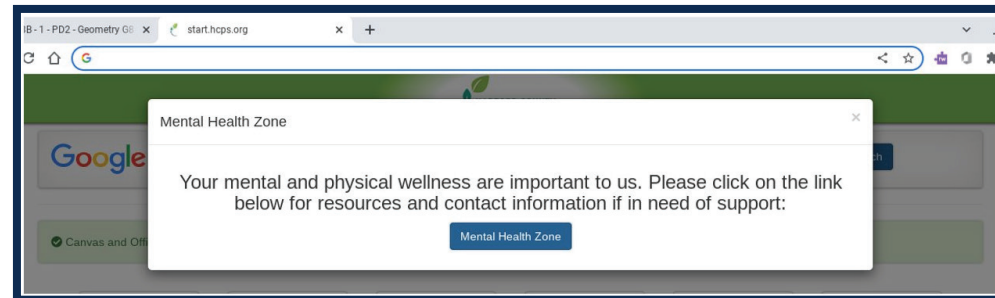| Year	# of Providers	
2017-2018	3	6 schools
2018-2021	5	
2021-2022	8	54 schools
2022-2023	10	

Student Mental Health Zone

The HCPS Student Mental Health Zone is dedicated to providing news, information, and resources relating to all things mental health.

- **Absence Resource**
- **Harford Crisis Center**
- **Mental Health Supports**
- **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline**
- **Parent Academy**
- **Virtual Calming Room**
- **Care Solace**

Mental health support message installed as log-in pop-up for all students.

Mental Health Zone

Your mental and physical wellness are important to us. Please click on the link below for resources and contact information if in need of support:

Mental Health Zone

HELP FOR PHYSICAL, SEXUAL, EMOTIONAL ABUSE OR NEGLECT
Child protective services (CPS)*
(410)836-4700, press 1
*After hours, contact the Sheriff's Department (410)838-6600

HELP WHEN YOU FEEL ANXIOUS OR DEPRESSED AND NEED SOMEONE TO TALK WITH TO STAY SAFE
Crisis Services:
Dial 2-1-1 or Harford Crisis Center
1-800-NEXT-STEP;
1-800-639-8763

TO REPORT THREATS OR SITUATIONS THAT PUT YOUR SAFETY, OR OTHERS' SAFETY, AT RISK
Safe Schools Maryland anonymous tip line:
1-833-MD-B-SAFE;
1-833-632-7233
Safe Schools Maryland Tip Line

HELP IF YOU ARE THINKING ABOUT SUICIDE
Maryland Crisis Hotline
1-800-422-0009 or 9-1-1*
National Suicide Prevention Lifeline
Dial 9-8-8
*If in need of emergency life saving care

HEALTH AND SAFETY DECISION MAKING

COVID-19 safety mitigation has proven to be an actively evolving effort. As changes occur rapidly, anything in this plan can change based on new information and new guidance.

As such, the following is how HCPS forms safety mitigation plans:

- Review guidance from the CDC
- Comply with Governor's Orders or Federal Orders impacting schools
- Comply with directives from MSDE or MDH
- Consult with the HCHD
- Consult with special education service providers
- Consult with internal stakeholder groups including: COVID-19 Mitigation Task Force, recovery focus groups, COVID-19 Outbreak Team, principal advisory groups, senior leadership, instructional leadership team, and administrative leadership team

The following is how HCPS communicates changes to safety mitigation measures:

- Operational Status Infographics, when needed
- Updates to this document, Continuity of Learning
- Board Meetings and weekly Board Updates
- Superintendent's Bulletins
- Staff Newsletters
- Updated virtual professional development
- District-wide direct communication to parents/guardians via phone, email, and text messages
- **Updates to the HCPS COVID-19 Web Resources page.**

HEALTH AND SAFETY PROTOCOLS

HCPS is committed to safety and health and will follow the CDC guidance which "emphasizes implementing layered prevention strategies," whereby it is not just one approach that protects our students and staff from COVID-19, but it is the combination of multiple approaches working together.

MUST DO'S:

- Stay home when sick
- Frequent handwashing
- Sanitization and cleaning
- Respiratory etiquette

SUPPORT:

- Physical distancing
- COVID-19 testing
- Ventilation and outdoor activities
- Vaccinations
- Masks optional in all HCPS buildings
- Quarantine as directed

HEALTH AND SAFETY PROTOCOLS, cont.

Cleaning

Special considerations for cleaning are as follows:

- High touch surfaces are cleaned with disinfectant
- Spray bottles of disinfectant are available to staff so high touch surfaces can be routinely wiped down
- Paper towels and soap are available at classroom sinks and are checked routinely

Ventilation

- In response to COVID-19, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating, and Air Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE) Epidemic Task Force issued guidance to help schools retrofit and plan for the improvement of indoor air quality (IAQ) to slow the transmission of viruses via HVAC systems. To ensure alignment with this guidance Harford County Public Schools (HCPS) partnered with multiple mechanical engineering firms to evaluate all HVAC systems throughout HCPS facilities, to identify areas needing improvement, and to provide recommendations to further enhance IAQ. Currently HCPS Facilities Department is on track to complete all filter upgrades to the recommended MERV 13 level of filtration by the start of the 2022-23 school year.

- HCPS continues to run all HVAC systems to maximize/optimize air filtration and fresh air exchange; continues to perform preventative maintenance tasks including routine air filter changes; continues to monitor system performance to ensure systems are operating per design; and continues to respond to all indoor air quality issues and concerns in a timely fashion. Additionally, when appropriate, supplemental and/or portable filtration systems will be utilized on a case-by-case basis. Schools wanting to deploy and maintain supplemental/portable filtration systems can do so by submitting requests through the HCPS School Sponsored Project approval process.

- Nurses may have air purifiers based on the needs of their building and spaces.

COVID-19 HEALTH RESPONSE PLANS

If a student or staff member becomes ill with COVID-19 or a COVID-19 symptom, school nurses will follow protocols regarding isolation and quarantine including but not limited to:

- Require a mask in the health suite
- Focus on ensuring isolation for any individual with COVID-19 symptoms while waiting diagnosis and when positive for COVID-19
- Provide consultation with families regarding household and high-risk close contacts
- Consult the Decision Aid provided by MDH when appropriate
- Consult with the HCHD when appropriate

COVID-19 Testing, Quarantine, and Isolation Protocols

- HCPS may provide rapid antigen diagnostic testing for symptomatic students and staff, only if the symptoms develop during the school day.
- In Spring 2022, HCPS distributed home test kits to staff and students.
- Families or staff who opt to use home testing kits should email a picture of the test result with their name and date of test printed on the test kit to the school nurse.
- According to the guidelines outlined in the **Guidance to Support Safe In-Person Operations for PreK-12 Schools and Child Care Programs**, "universal contact tracing is no longer recommended in schools and child care programs."

Stakeholder feedback indicates that community wants quarantine and isolation protocols that are effective, cause the least disruptions, and clear to understand. With each change in quarantine and isolation this feedback is utilized.

COVID-19 HEALTH RESPONSE PLANS, cont.

Health Equity

Reopening plan promotes health equity for groups disproportionately affected by COVID-19

- Diagnostic testing is provided in all school building for students or staff who become ill during the day.
- School based COVID-19 vaccination clinics began in all Title One schools in January 2022.
- School Based Health Clinics are opening to meet the needs of underserved students.
- All students, including students with IEPs, are eligible to seek a virtual seat at Swan Creek School. Families interested in enrolling their student(s) for the 2022-2023 school year can contact the school directly. HCPS will consider all requests on an individual basis, as openings become available.

Classroom and Schoolwide Outbreak Notifications

- Your school will inform you of a classroom or school-wide outbreak designated by the HCHD. HCPS will NOT notify you of an individual case of COVID-19 in your child's classroom or school.
- HCPS will follow the guidelines outlined in the **Guidance to Support Safe In-Person Operations for PreK-12 Schools and Child Care Programs** provided by MSDE and MDH.

Vaccination Clinics

- HCPS worked with the HCHD in the 2021-21 school year to have vaccine clinics in schools for students and staff eligible and interested in receiving a COVID-19 vaccine. HCPS will continue this partnership if the need arises to conduct vaccine clinics in the future.

COVID-19 HEALTH RESPONSE PLANS, cont.

COVID-19 Vaccination Incentive for all HCPS Employees

- An important safety layer of any COVID-19 mitigation program is the support and encouragement of vaccinations. The CDC, the Maryland Department of Health and the Harford County Health Department stand behind vaccination as the leading public health prevention strategy to end the COVID-19 pandemic. Vaccinations, to include boosters, reduce the transmission and severity of the disease. Having a larger percentage of our HCPS staff vaccinated is critical to keeping our staff healthy and able to report to work.

Reducing staff quarantines has had a positive impact on our ability to staff our buildings and provide a consistent instructional program for the students we serve.

HCPS offered all employees a $500 incentive for having completed the primary vaccination series and booster. Each employee who voluntarily submitted documentation to the Human Resources Department demonstrated receipt of their individual vaccination doses received a stipend up to $500.
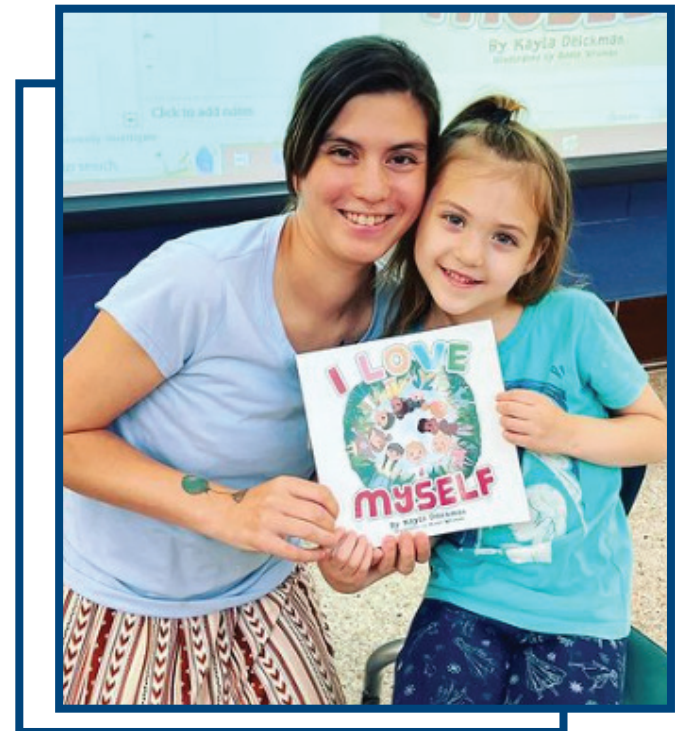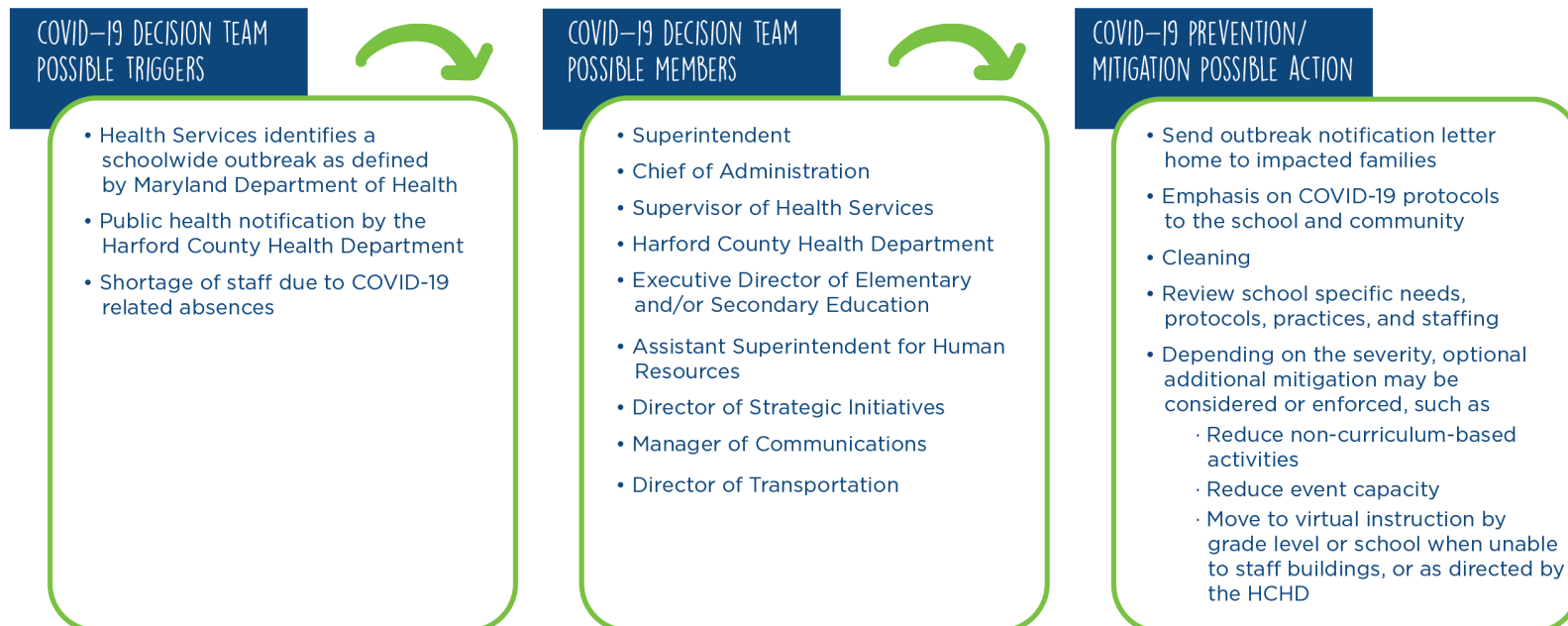
OUTBREAK RESPONSE DECISION MAKING

HCPS will monitor the experience with COVID-19 at each school and take action depending on the severity of that experience. A team works very closely with the HCHD to determine when a school experiences an outbreak and what steps are needed to protect our community.

Classroom/cohort outbreak: 1) Three or more laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 cases among students/teachers/staff in a specified group with onsets (or, if asymptomatic, collection dates) within a 14-day period, and who are epidemiologically linked in the school setting, but not household contacts; or

School-wide outbreak: 2) Five or more classrooms or cohorts with cases from separate households that meet the cohort outbreak definition that occurs within 14 days; or 5% or more unrelated students/teachers/staff have confirmed COVID-19 within a 14 day period [minimum of 10 unrelated students/teachers/staff].

The HCPS Communications Office is responsible for the school system's public relations and communications efforts including marketing, internal communications, community engagement, media relations, etc. Jillian Lader, Manager of Communications, (410) 588-5203, https://www.hcps.org/departments/communications/

COVID-19 DECISION TEAM POSSIBLE TRIGGERS

- Health Services identifies a schoolwide outbreak as defined by Maryland Department of Health
- Public health notification by the Harford County Health Department
- Shortage of staff due to COVID-19 related absences

COVID-19 DECISION TEAM POSSIBLE MEMBERS

- Superintendent
- Chief of Administration
- Supervisor of Health Services
- Harford County Health Department
- Executive Director of Elementary and/or Secondary Education
- Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources
- Director of Strategic Initiatives
- Manager of Communications
- Director of Transportation

COVID-19 PREVENTION/ MITIGATION POSSIBLE ACTION

- Send outbreak notification letter home to impacted families
- Emphasis on COVID-19 protocols to the school and community
- Cleaning
- Review school specific needs, protocols, practices, and staffing
- Depending on the severity, optional additional mitigation may be considered or enforced, such as
  · Reduce non-curriculum-based activities
  · Reduce event capacity
  · Move to virtual instruction by grade level or school when unable to staff buildings, or as directed by the HCHD

Definitions provided by the Maryland Department of Health (MDH).

TRANSPORTATION

Students are not required to wear a face covering but may opt to do so. Drivers are not required to wear a face covering but may opt to do so. Students should not be put on the school bus if they are feeling ill. As shared in the HCPS Parent Student Handbook; "School bus transportation will be withdrawn from a student who is excluded from the classroom as a result of a condition that presents a clear and direct health risk to others."

Sanitization and Disinfection

High touch surfaces should be cleaned or sanitized between the morning and afternoon bus routes.

All HCPS buses have been equipped GPS to track locations where buses are traveling in real time. This system allows for tracking of substitute bus drivers and regular route drivers, as well as field trip activities.

Transportation Options for Families

Families who are eligible for bus service may choose to use assigned HCPS school buses and assigned stops, drop off/pick-up in their personal vehicle, or when determined by a parent/guardian that it is safe to do so they may allow a student to walk/bike to school.

Unauthorized personnel including parents or guardians are not permitted to board the school bus.

All HCPS bus rules must be followed.

CONNECTIONS TO BLUEPRINT FOR MARYLAND'S FUTURE

The Blueprint for Maryland's Future mandates ways to support students both due to the COVID-19 pandemic and to address the physical and behavior health needs of HCPS students. The following is informative of the work in these areas that aligns with Continuity of Learning:

- A one-page overview of the Blueprint work related to supporting students can be found **here**
- **Report on Trauma Behavioral Health**
- District training to staff on mental health, behavioral health and trauma
- Completed a district-wide Mental Health Survey
- **Focus Group Analysis Report**
- **Tutoring Report to the AIB – December 2022**
- **Behavioral Health Report**
- **Unique School Designations**
- **Blueprint Implementation Plan**
- **Blueprint Milestone Report**

BLUEPRINT
for our students' future

Continuity of Learning Plan
2023-2024

HARFORD COUNTY
PUBLIC SCHOOLS