

SY 2021-22 Continuous Education Plan (CEP)

LEA Name: The Next Step/El Proximo Paso PCS

LEA Head of School Name: Jonathan Mathis

LEA Type: Adult

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Background and Purpose

The Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) asked all local education agencies (LEAs) to develop **Continuous Education Plans (CEPs)** for the 2021-22 school year in order to communicate a detailed explanation of their plans to provide both a full 6-hour day of in-person instruction for all students five days a week and to offer distance learning under limited circumstances, including to students with medical certifications; to accommodate staff or students needing to quarantine; and in response to changes in public health conditions. Additionally, LEAs will use the CEPs to communicate to OSSE and the public their plan for supporting a **Safe Reopening, Student and Staff Well-Being, and Accelerated Learning**. For LEAs receiving ESSER III-ARP funds, the CEPs also satisfy US Department of Education requirements for developing plans for a safe return to in-person instruction and continuity of services, as well as plans for the use of ESSER III-ARP funds. **The plan below has been approved for these purposes.**

The CEP application was closely aligned to OSSE's [Guiding Principles for Continuous Education](#). These guiding principles are intended to help LEAs develop effective and equitable CEPs that support Safe Reopening, Student and Staff Well-Being, and Accelerated Learning for all students, especially those with the most significant learning gaps and students typically furthest from opportunity.

LEAs receiving ESSER III-ARP funds must update their plan every six months, at a minimum, between the date of publication and Sept. 30, 2023. LEAs not receiving ESSER III-ARP funds may choose to periodically update their plans based on the evolving nature of the District's response to the pandemic. Additional questions pertaining to the implementation of these plans should be directed to the school and LEA.

Student and Staff Well-Being

2.A: Whole Child Supports

- 3. Describe the LEA's plan for supporting students' social-emotional, mental and behavioral health needs during continuous learning and school recovery, including:**
- a. How the LEA will provide opportunities for social-emotional learning, relationship building and mental health awareness for all students;**
 - b. How the LEA will screen and refer students for mental and behavioral health needs, whether the LEA will employ a universal screening approach, and how it will be implemented if so; and**
 - c. How the LEA will provide direct mental and behavioral health services for students in need.**

The Next Step Public Charter School is well positioned to continue supporting students in these areas. As a core part of our model, we maintain a robust Student Support and Engagement Division, which includes full-time Case Managers, full-time Career & Life Skills (CLS) Advisors, and a School Social Worker. As a part of program design, all students are assigned to a Case Manager. Our team of Case Managers and CLS Advisors, along with the School Social Worker, maintain regular contact and outreach to all our students. This outreach is on a weekly basis, as assigned per individual caseload and includes an in-house universal assessment of basic and mental health status, and/or needs, as well as a career interest assessment. After completion of the career interest assessment, CLS Advisors reach out to their caseloads to start conversations about their career plan. Planning sessions regarding career plans also include conversations about higher education culture in order to prepare students for their upcoming transition.

As we have done during the past two academic years, we will continue to facilitate life skills workshops through our Career and Life Skills program, utilizing the Passport to Success curriculum. During these workshops, students learn and enhance their workforce skills. Lessons include topics such as resume building, managing strong emotions, time management, stress in the workplace, job searching, goal setting, assertiveness, managing conflicts, positive relationships and many more. Each year, a vision board workshop is facilitated where students have the opportunity to work on their own vision boards.

With regards to Student Support Services and Social-Emotional Learning, the Case Managers have all undergone a robust training on Solution-Focused Brief Therapy (SFBT). This training has been implemented throughout the case management work with students, as well as during staff meetings via Case Conceptualizations. To further support students' social-emotional needs, the Student Profile Questionnaire is issued or re-administered during the beginning of the school year.

We will also implement the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES) Assessment in conjunction with the Strengths-Based Questionnaire. The outcomes from both of these assessments will inform our approach to support services for our students.

Our Case Managers will continue to use various systems such as Schoology and Quickbase and EdMod, which provides seamless communication tools that allow teachers to see what strategies or interventions are being used, create goals, and monitor progress, all in one place. Students on a multi-tiered systems of support plan require organized communication, coordinated services, and everyone to be on the same page to track progress and evaluate interventions. This software includes SEL interventions embedded in the software. EdMod helps educators ensure that IEP goals are measurable, and makes each data point available to everyone who influences the education of the student. Progress monitoring truly becomes a team effort and each step towards success is visible to the whole team.

Following an assessment of challenges, strengths and needs, referrals are being accepted, on a rolling basis, by the School Social Worker (SSW). Our SSW provides school-based, in-person and virtual mental health services, ensuring that students have access and flexibility in scheduling regardless of their class schedule. These appointments—whether in the form of support or intervention—are scheduled by the SSW based on student availability on a weekly basis. When school-based Social Work services reach capacity, students are being referred to community organizations for mental health services, to include accessing the District’s Mental Health Hotline—for the provision of mental health resources.

In addition to the individual-based supports and interventions, our SSW and Case Managers will continue to create a mix of virtual and in-class group workshops and informational sessions for students. Our efforts here will offer students another option for a safe space for peer-to-peer supports. These group workshops will focus on topics to include time management, organization, healthy relationships and boundary setting. The workshops are intended to provide students with the skills to enhance social emotional learning through their increased awareness and ability to name emotions and manage stress or ongoing themes that emerge from the data collected from Case Managers and the Chief of Student Support and Engagement.

During the 2020-2021 school year, our Student Support and Engagement Division piloted a series of mindfulness activities. In the upcoming school year, our Student Support and Engagement Division will continue to provide a series of monthly on-demand mindfulness activities that students can access and implement on their own time. Additionally, teachers will also have access to the videos that they may choose to incorporate in their classrooms with students. These resources will include unique, virtual and in-person activities to create a sense of peace and balance. The on-demand and in-person mindfulness activities will greatly benefit the mental health of both students and staff. These activities/videos will include: Anxiety, Stress and Attachment; Self-care; Mindfulness for Staff—Addressing Secondary Trauma; and Mindfulness Workshops for Parents and Children.

To complement the SSW and Case Managers, our Attendance and Transportation Coordinators are also conducting outreach to students on a weekly basis to assess challenges with engaging in online learning (including access to technology, childcare challenges, mental health needs, to name a few). Our Attendance and Transportation Coordinators work closely with and provide necessary referrals to Case Managers to further support students and their needs.

Should a minor or adult learner be unresponsive to phone calls, text messages, emails or online learning, the Attendance and Transportation Coordinators, along with Case Managers and/or SSW will initiate safety checks via home visit, referral MPD and/or Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA). Our primary communication has been most frequent with CFSA.

As we turn our attention to support for basic needs, the Student Support and Engagement Division will continue to connect students to community-based resources for the provision of basic needs. In particular, The Next Step PCS will continue to steward our connection and relationships with agencies such as the DC Diaper Bank and Martha’s Table. We want to be sure to connect our students and their respective families to resources such as food, basic toiletries and the like. We speak more, specifically, about our supports for parenting students in the next portion.

The Student Support and Engagement Division has designed several unique offerings for parenting students, including but not limited to those who participate in our Child Care offerings. The four key examples we have selected to highlight here are as follows: Child Care Specific YouTube Channel; Care Packages; Referrals to Neighboring Child Care Programs and Virtual Workshops. The Child Care Specific YouTube Channel includes content produced, recorded and posted by members of the Child Care staff members. The focus is on fine motor, gross motor, language acquisition,

art, math and language arts.

With regard to Care Packages, our staff are securing resources and materials to help parents keep their children engaged and excited about learning. These resources have included a list of activities that can be facilitated by the parent or student and links to online resources. Additionally, if students need to stay home due to illness, they will receive a small box of school supplies for their children to use at home in conjunction with the packet.

In order to further support our parenting students, the child care department in collaboration with the case managers, will assist students with locating nearby child care programs and preschools that their children can enroll in. Additionally, we will support the students in the registration process for the local child care centers and for vouchers. We will emphasize that we are providing referrals and not recommendations. Our goal is to provide our students with the resources and support they need to make informed decisions regarding their children without interrupting their own educational pursuits.

Lastly, the Virtual Workshops for parents will include topics such as developmental milestones for children and positive behavior management techniques. These sessions are aimed to provide parenting students with information on what is developmentally appropriate for children at varying ages, while also providing resources that are available if the parents notice the child has not yet met the milestone.

4. Describe the LEA’s proactive approach to behavior and discipline that accounts for the challenge of transitioning from distance learning back to the school building, as well as how the LEA will use positive, relevant and developmentally appropriate discipline practices, including possibly using a trauma-informed and/or restorative justice framework for discipline.

Consistent with our mission to “provide students who face extraordinary life challenges with the opportunity to continue their education”, our school became a pioneer of Restorative Practices many years ago. Through our engagement in the community of practitioners, we have continued to evolve and adapt our practices over the years. As a result of our learning, we have already adapted our student discipline policies around restorative principles and provided multiple trainings to our staff on the effective implementation of the restorative approach to addressing student conduct and implementing disciplinary interventions. We have also established the practice of starting class with a dialogue circle, which allows the classroom community to explore topics of relevance and mutual interest as a means to establish a feeling of belonging, trust and empathy in the community. When conflict does arise, whether it is student-to-student, student-to-staff, or among various factions of the community, a restorative conference is typically the first and preferred mode to resolve the matter. These conferences are facilitated by a neutral party and their aim is to get all the parties involved to acknowledge their own role in the conflict and how their actions affected the other person(s) involved, to apply empathy towards one another, and to try by all means to arrive at a non-punitive solution to repair the relationship(s). This strong foundation in Restorative Practices will allow us to facilitate community building activities as well as to establish an atmosphere of trust and an empathetic approach toward any situations resulting from the challenge of transitioning back into in-person learning.

Another area in which our school continues to evolve is the area of Trauma Informed Care. We have contracted the services of Sage Wellness for a few years now as an investment to further expand our staff’s competencies around positive, relevant and developmentally appropriate discipline practices. This training has been required of all our staff during the past two school years. Each session includes a post assessment which all staff must pass with a score of 80%. A specific focus area of this work has been on working with students from culturally, linguistically and socio-economically diverse backgrounds. During the 2020-2021 school year, our work with Sage Wellness became virtual

and one of the advantages of this format was that it allowed us to record the sessions for future use. These sessions will become an invaluable resource to train new teachers and staff as we transition into the new academic year. In preparation for the transition into full-time in-person learning, we have asked Sage Wellness to incorporate elements that allow us to explore the impact of virtual learning on our students and staff, and ways to support teachers in their efforts to assist students as they navigate the transition period.

As proactive measures, our student and staff orientation will be inclusive of a (re)introduction to our student code of conduct, disciplinary policies, and school values, all of which function in synch with our restorative practices model. During this portion of the orientation, students will have an opportunity to explore what all of these concepts mean in the context of a transition from virtual to in-person learning.

2.B: Educator Wellness

- 6. Describe the LEA's plan for supporting teacher and staff social-emotional and mental health needs during continuous learning and school recovery, including:**
- **a. Applicable professional development opportunities in the areas of trauma-informed practices, including grief and loss, to support educators' own social-emotional and mental health; and**
 - **b. How the LEA might offer access to mental health supports for staff internally or through established partnerships with community organizations.**

Through our continued engagement with Sage Wellness, we will expand the range of professional development offerings to include Trauma Informed Practices for educators, in conjunction with our already established work focusing on student-based practices. We will include a series of sessions designed around supporting the needs of educators in the areas of grief, loss, and other social-emotional needs expressed by teachers and staff during the debriefing part of each session. These sessions will be added to our monthly PD schedule and will include a post-session survey to assess the effectiveness, value, and learning gained from each session.

In response to the individual social emotional needs of teachers and staff, our Human Resources department typically meets with the individual presenting the need to assess the level of support they may require from the organization. Once the need is established, a course of action is determined in support of the individual. The Human Resources Director advises the individual to make use of their options and guides them in the process. These options may include taking medical, vacation, bereavement, or other types of leave for which they may be entitled, including MFLA leave. Other options may include taking advantage of the Employee Assistance Program, which offers up to five counseling sessions free of charge to the individual on a range of items, including social emotional well-being, or using their health benefits via Kaiser Permanente to seek a more intensive level of care. If the situation is of a medical nature, the school will make the necessary accommodations in accordance with the medical documentation the employee is able to provide.

2.C: Family Engagement

- 7. Describe how the LEA will communicate with families about safe reopening, student well-being and accelerated learning, including:**
- **a. How the LEA will solicit and incorporate student/family feedback on these plans, both before the school year starts and consistently as the school year progresses;**

- **b. How the LEA will communicate its CEP to families, specifically its approach to safe reopening, ensuring student well-being, addressing interrupted instruction, and accelerating learning, including how the LEA will reach families who speak a language other than English; and**
- **c. How and when the LEA will communicate with families their student’s status and progress with learning as informed by LEA-selected assessments.**

The School will take advantage of its already established weekly community assemblies, which will continue virtually and in person during the summer of 2021, to communicate about safe reopening, student well-being, and accelerated learning, as well as to conduct Q&A sessions on related matters. During that time, families will be informed of the key aspects of the plan as well introduced to our daily feedback system, which consists of a Google survey designed for all members of the community to respond to a series of questions regarding their experience in the context of transitioning to in-person learning. The questions will be designed to encourage respondents to observe the implementation of safety protocols, their own level of comfort with being in the building, and the quality and effectiveness of educational activities for accelerated learning. These responses will be monitored on a daily basis and strategies to address concerns will be designed and implemented accordingly by the management team. This practice will continue to be implemented throughout the duration of the school year or until such a time when it is no longer necessary.

The CEP will again be presented at the beginning of the school year during orientation week. Students and families will again have an opportunity to engage in Q&As and to have their feedback incorporated into our practices through the weekly community assemblies and the daily feedback survey.

In terms of language access, all of our school’s communications are usually done in English and Spanish since that is the most largely represented language in the school. Also, because of our long history of serving students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, our annual budget includes an allotment for translation services, which is typically used to translate all important information into the major languages represented at the school. We intend to provide all important information related to the CEP and its implementation in the languages represented at the school and distribute them to the corresponding families electronically.

The Next Step PCS conducts pre and post assessments at the beginning and end of each semester. Student level data is shared with each individual student (and their guardians in the case of minors) by their respective teachers(s) during the same week. A student profile is printed and/or shared electronically indicating the level of mastery the student has achieved both in terms of grade equivalent and in terms individual standards. An individual conference takes place at the same time to guide students through the meaning of the data and to develop strategies to make gains in those areas. This practice will continue during the 2021-2022 school year and be done in person or virtually depending on the context.

2.D: Attendance and Re-Engagement

- 8. Describe the LEA’s approach to re-engaging students who were consistently less engaged with distance learning in the 2020-21 school year, including how the LEA is identifying these students and conducting individualized outreach to students and families to reengage them in learning in the 2021-22 school year.**

The Dean of Student Success, in collaboration with our Attendance and Transportation Coordinators will conduct weekly outreach to students who are not engaging either in person or virtually. Based upon attendance data gathered through Quickbase and Schoology, the team will identify and assist these students in overcoming the challenges to their engagement. In collaboration with each student, a plan will be developed, identifying practices, resources, and individuals necessary for full re-engagement.

Students will participate in an abbreviated on-boarding program as a reintroduction to TNSPCS. Bi-weekly correspondence to students will include personal attendance data, and check-in's will be differentiated (bi-weekly/monthly) depending upon each student's needs. The parents of minor students will be invited to participate in the on-boarding process, and all correspondence will be shared with them.

As needs are identified, infographics, webinars, and workshops, as well as other applicable resources will be shared with students and families.

A similar approach will be employed in the case of students who were consistently less engaged with distant learning in school year 2020-2021. Our Data Analyst will generate a list of students whose average daily attendance rate during distant learning was significantly lower than the average rate of their peers. Based on this data, the Dean of Student Success, in collaboration with the Attendance and Transportation Coordinators and Student Support Services team, will conduct individualized outreach and intervention sessions with each student to identify barriers to their engagement as well as to implement strategies and resources to help them remove those barriers. Strategies may include bi-weekly personal data reviews, support group sessions, workshops, webinars, and electronic correspondence to serve as reminders. Other strategies and supports will be identified based on the unique needs of each student

Accelerated Learning

3.A: Set Clear Goals and High Expectations for All Students

9. How did the LEA adjust its approach to standards, curriculum, instruction, and assessments due to the pandemic in the 2020-21 school year? Please select all that apply:

- Taught fewer standards than in a typical school year / not able to teach all the standards
- Taught a narrowed or prioritized set of standards relative to a typical school year
- Did not adjust standards / Taught the same standards as a typical year
- Adjusted curricular scope
- Adjusted curricular sequence
- Did not adjust curriculum / followed same curricular scope and sequence as a typical year
- Adjusted types of assessments administered
- Adjusted assessment administration schedule and/or frequency
- Adjusted use of assessment data for planning instruction

10. Describe the LEA's approach to assessing the extent of interrupted instruction in the upcoming 2021-22 school year, including:

- a. For which content areas do your schools plan to administer non-state summative assessments in the 2021-22 school year?**

- English language arts (ELA)
- Math
- Science
- English language proficiency

- **b. Which assessment tools the LEA will use to measure student learning and interrupted instruction throughout the 2021-22 school year for all grade levels, including details on the content areas and grade levels for which each will be used. This list of assessment tools may include, but is not limited to, diagnostic, screener, interim, benchmark, end-of-course and end-of-year assessments;**

This item is not applicable in the case of The Next Step. As an adult school, we are not required to administer state summative assessments. We do not administer summative assessments. The assessments we will use are not summative assessments. Instead:

The school will continue using the following assessments for placement and post-testing: TABE 11/12 Reading and TABE 11/12 Math levels E, M, D, and A for the English track, TABE CLAS-E Reading, Listening, and Writing levels 1, 2, 3, and 4 for the ESL track, STAR Spanish Reading and Math Adaptive Assessments for the Spanish track.

- **c. A calendar or timeline showing when the LEA intends to administer each local assessment during the school year (please provide estimated date ranges if the calendar is not yet set);**

Our testing dates are included in our school calendar as follows:

- Post-Testing, Semester 1, Fall 2021, all students: February 14th - 17th
- Post-Testing, Semester 2, Spring 2022, all students: June 20th - 23th
- Post-Testing, Summer 2022, all students: August 1st - 3rd

- **d. Whether you set goals³ for performance on non-state summative assessments, and, if so, for each assessment, content area, and grade level:**
 - i. Whether these goals are set by the assessment provider or are determined by the LEA; and**
 - ii. How you set and track on these goals over time and, in particular, this year (2021-22) if you are introducing new approaches, including whether there are any new procedures or processes you are using and whether there are differences across schools, specific groups of students, content areas and/or grades; and**

The Next Step Public Charter School designs differentiated instruction for all students based on the academic profile yielded by the corresponding pre-assessment.

- **e. How the LEA will use this non-state summative assessment data to monitor student progress and adjust instruction across learning environments throughout the 2021-22 school year, including whether and how this approach differs across schools, specific groups of students, content areas and/or grades; and**

The Next Step Public Charter School designs differentiated instruction for all students based on the academic profile yielded by the corresponding pre-assessment.

- **f. For LEAs with students attending non-public special education schools: Please describe how you are collaborating with the non-public school to assess the extent of interrupted instruction for students.**

3.B: Employing Intentional Strategies for Accelerating Learning

11. Describe the LEA’s overall approach to addressing interrupted instruction and the need to accelerate learning for students in the coming 2021-22 school year, including how it will collect, analyze and use data from multiple sources to inform instruction.

We use a data-based approach that has as a main goal, to determine specific needs of students and plan strategies that respond to them. At the beginning of the semester, all students take a placement test that determines their level, helping teachers differentiate instructional strategies to target these specific needs.

Instructional Coaches support teachers in the data analysis during PLC sessions, and later with the implementation of these strategies in the classroom.

12. Describe how the LEA will maximize accelerated learning opportunities for students by indicating the specific strategies that the LEA plans to use (select all that apply):

- **a. Adjusted Scheduling**

- Adjusted class/block/bell schedules
- After-school programming
- Longer school day
- Longer school year
- Summer 2021 programming

- Summer 2022 programming
- School break/holiday programming
- Weekend programming (e.g., Saturday school)

• **b. Instructional Changes**

- High-dosage tutoring
- New curriculum purchase
- New intervention program or support
- New uses of staff planning time for accelerated learning
- New professional development for staff on accelerated learning

• **c. Staffing and Related Supports**

- Additional staffing
- Additional vendor and/or community partner support
- New hardware purchase
- New software purchase

• **d. Other**

- **e. In the space below, please describe in detail the LEA's approach to implementing each strategy selected above and how it will accelerate student learning.**

As an adult school, we serve each student based on their current academic functioning level. Typically, this is based on the student's grade equivalent in the area of Reading. At our school we will offer split schedules so that students may receive instruction at different levels for Language/Social Studies and Math/Science. For students who have already passed the official GED test in one or more academic subjects, their schedules will be adjusted so that they may

participate in more than one section of the subject they are still mastering. For our day time students, we will also offer after school programming so that they may receive additional support in specific subjects.

Our summer programming for 2021 includes our Summer Bridge seminar series, designed as a re/engaging opportunity for new or re-enrolling students. Our accelerated learning and targeted intervention program is designed to be an extension of the spring semester and is an opportunity for students to target individual objectives based on their academic profile (which is based on their most recent post-test and identifies standards needed in order to master an instructional level. This approach will continue during the summer of 2022.

We are prepared to offer multi-subject personalized learning in the afternoon hours between our day time and evening programs; intensive tutoring will also be offered by co-teachers and support teachers during regular class times. Intensive tutoring will occur one-to-one or in very small groups on a sustained, daily basis, during the school day, to help all students accelerate their learning in an individualized manner.

The Instructional Leadership Team will facilitate conversations that will ensure instructors focus on what students need to know in order to be successful at the next instructional level. They will also assist in the creation of standard-aligned formative and summative assessments that capture student learning (i.e PBL and/or formative assessments) with data.

To increase the range of materials available for instruction as well as for targeted interventions, our school has also purchased new curriculum materials from Paxen/Steck-Vaughn solutions that are aligned with the TABE 11/12 standards. These materials are available online and will be used to provide additional and flexible access to the curriculum on their own time as well as during class time.

To extend the range of student-level supports, we have created an EdTech office staffed by two full time technology teachers. The team provides whole class instruction on the use of technology as well as individualized support to students and staff via regular office hours. This added support will serve to observe, identify, and target skill development at the individual and whole group level.

Through our weekly Professional Learning Community Sessions, we will provide space for collaborative planning time, co-planning, and student-focused collaboration among our teaching staff. This will allow teachers to engage in richer and more meaningful cross-curricular, and cross-level planning within tracks.

As a key-feature of our Talent Management framework, all of our staff participates in Job-Embedded Professional Development (JEPD). We will take advantage of this platform to include accelerated learning.

In terms of staffing, we have contacted with Teachers On Demand to ensure that substitute teachers and tutors are available on an as needed and on-going basis.

We have installed Cameras and microphones in many of our classrooms so that students are able to engage even when they are not able to attend school in person due to a COVID-19 or other qualifying situation.

13. Describe the LEA’s approach to reviewing and revising its staff professional learning plan to account for lessons learned during the pandemic and to build skills for staff to meet new and emerging student needs around safe reopening, well-being and accelerated learning.

Professional development and ongoing PLC sessions will respond directly to the needs identified by school leaders and staff. Current issues and trends in education, especially around returning to the school building, will be the focus of our professional learning in combination with a focus on student outcomes. Teacher feedback will directly inform the topics and methods of professional development that we provide.

14. Describe how the LEA plans to extend effective practices introduced during distance learning to enhance students’ academic and/or social-emotional progress.

The Curriculum and Instruction department will support teachers in bridging the change from virtual learning to concurrent/in school learning by identifying the instructional practices, tools, and routines that need to be used and followed. We will emphasize the continuation of using online platforms, assignments, and activities in order to enhance face-to-face instruction.

In addition, we will:

- Ensure Unpacked Standards are explicitly taught and woven throughout per learning unit (i.e bi-weekly, monthly projects).
- Engage instructors in reflection on their own practice as instructors
- Ensure that instructional coaches know the content/lessons planned and are able to step in and SHOW how it can be done if an instructor is unclear or needs assistance
- Create an accountability loop of coaching that is both supportive and directive.
- Facilitate conversations that will ensure instructors know what students need to know in order to be successful at the next level (i.e. ESL 1/2 2/3 3/4 4/5/6) and eventually C1 and C2 CEF
- Create standard aligned formative and summative assessments that capture student learning (i.e PBL and/or formative assessments) with data

15. For LEAs serving students in grades 9-12: Describe how the LEA will adjust its approaches to credit attainment, recovery and support for postsecondary transitions to ensure all students are on track to graduate.

- NA – The Next Step Public Charter School is an adult LEA

3.C: Special Populations

Students with Disabilities

LEAs must include students with disabilities in the general application of these guiding principles. After doing so, LEAs are additionally responsible for reviewing and conducting the following activities to ensure the continued provision of a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to students with disabilities. OSSE encourages LEAs to conduct individualized review of student data to identify appropriate accelerated learning instructional approaches. LEAs should also consider whether or not a student’s individualized education program (IEP) is designed to support accelerated learning and should engage families in information sharing regarding the LEA’s plan for the delivery of accelerated learning, IEP services designed to support accelerated learning, and the

delivery of FAPE.

16. Describe the LEA's plan to serve students with disabilities, including students the LEA has placed in non-public special education schools and students participating in distance learning, including:

- **a. The steps the LEA will take to ensure that students with disabilities are assessed upon return to school to determine the nature and extent of interrupted instruction on their receipt of educational benefit and to update IEPs as appropriate to ensure supports designed to ensure access to accelerated learning;**
- **b. At the campus and LEA level, how the LEA will evaluate the need for, determine or design appropriate services, schedule and deliver accelerated learning to students with disabilities, and how LEAs will communicate those instructional approaches to families;**
- **c. How the LEA will ensure equitable access to educational opportunity across learning environments, including how the LEA will ensure that students receive equal access to interventions and least restrictive environment (LRE) continuum, and that accelerated or distance learning approaches are not used to place them in more restrictive environments;**
- **d. How the LEA will continue to support parent training for students receiving related services through distance learning as needed; and**
- **e. The steps the LEA is taking to ensure that family members with disabilities (e.g., a guardian with visual impairment) can access content to support their students' learning.**

The special education department continues to promote collaborative practices across educational settings between regular staff, special educators and related service providers. We will continue to collaborate with local, state, private, and community agencies to establish, implement and maintain local interagency planning of programs for students with disabilities. We will ensure that students with disabilities are provided access to the general education curriculum and extra-curricular activities in the regular education setting to the maximum extent possible with assistive support to maintain the student's progress. Compliance with state and federal regulations regarding students' annual IEP reviews, re-evaluation procedure, and periodic program updates will continue as we utilize state and federal guidelines to maintain timely procedures for the identification processes for students suspected of having disabilities.

The special education team will look at each individual student to determine whether compensatory services are needed. The extent of a student's compensatory services, if needed, will be an individualized determination made by the team. Some illustrative, non-exclusive elements included:

- If special education and related services could not be modified to a continuous learning/distance learning environment
- If some special education and related services were modified but did not fully meet the student's education needs
- The student's IEPs: pre-extended closure, amended, and revised
- The duration and circumstance of the school closure)e.g. Full closure or continuous learning/distance learning).

If a student did not receive services during the school's closure, our special education team will make an individualized determination as to whether and to what extent compensatory services are needed to make up for any skills that might have been lost. The special education team will ensure the delivery of services designed to mitigate student regression and address recovery of loss of learning that may have occurred during school closure due to COVID-19, as appropriate, to all students enrolled. The decisions will be based on a qualitative analysis of what the student received, what progress or regression the student experienced and what is needed to address recovery of lost learning and mitigate student regression.

The special education team will prioritize the most critical prerequisite skills and knowledge for each subject area on behalf of the students. We will utilize student assessments to diagnose the student's unfinished learning in the prerequisite content knowledge and skills. The scope and sequence/pacing guidance for each subject area will be adapted to reflect where teachers might need to provide acceleration support. Teachers will be trained to diagnose

students' unfinished learning and provide acceleration support. The students' progress on grade-appropriate assignments will be monitored and adjusted based on student results.

Examples of platforms we are currently exploring as accelerated learning approaches:

1. Saga Education: "Saga Education is an evidence-based, personalized tutoring model designed to support students struggling with math to put them on a path toward success and school graduation."
2. Literacy Lab: "Investing in early literacy is one of the most effective ways to help improve individual student's outcomes while at the same time improving schools on the whole. Our approach to this challenge is to provide evidence-based literacy intervention and assessment tools, rigorously trained full-time teacher/tutors to implement the model, and a coaching and support structure that ensures the success of the program and students."
3. City Year: "City Year helps students succeed by delivering holistic support to students, classrooms and the entire school."
4. Book Nook: "an online collaborative learning platform that provides literacy intervention through guided reading lessons, gamification, and assessment. Book Nook also provides online tutoring services and can connect students to vetted tutors."

Services will be provided in alignment with the total number of sessions outlined in the students' IEP. The Special Education teachers will collaborate with general education teachers to ensure appropriate accommodations and modifications are made. Special education teachers will work in conjunction with classroom teachers to determine additional modifications and adjustments to instructions, resources, and assessments. Special education teachers will provide home-based activities (materials to be provided by special education teachers, either modified classroom materials or materials specific to a student's IEP goals and objectives) We will provide alternative and/or additional online assessments, when appropriate and will monitor students' progress utilizing Education Modified platform and SEDS portal. Some sessions will be online service time (i.e. video-chat, google docs, Zoom, etc.) Some sessions will be provided via differentiated/modified home based activities. Related services (Speech/Language, Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, Social Work, Psychology, and BCBA support) will provide weekly assignments, provide email support to parents and students, and direct instruction through video conferencing when appropriate and when possible.

Special Education Teachers will provide guidance to caregivers via phone and/or email a minimum of twice weekly, providing additional resources as needed. Special education teachers will be available via email for questions relating to student learning activities during the school day at designated office hours.

Depending on the age of the student and their level of independence, parent roles will vary. We do not intend for parents to become 'the teacher', but we know that many parents will be assisting, supervising and helping. Parents can contact the special education director with questions and request for support if necessary.

17. For correctional facilities only: Describe the LEA/State Public Agency's plan to serve students with disabilities in correctional facilities, including:

- **a. The steps the LEA/State Public Agency will take to ensure that students with disabilities in correctional facilities are assessed to determine the nature and extent of interrupted instruction on their receipt of educational benefit;**
- **b. How the LEA/State Public Agency will evaluate the need for, determine or design appropriate services, schedule and deliver accelerated learning to students with disabilities in correctional facilities, and how LEAs will communicate those instructional approaches to families;**
- **c. The steps the LEA/State Public Agency is taking to ensure that family members with disabilities (e.g., a guardian with visual impairment) can access content to support their students' learning;**

- d. The manner in which the LEA/State Public Agency will deliver accelerated learning to students with disabilities during the 2020-21 school year and how LEA/State Public Agency will communicate those instructional approaches to families;
- e. How the LEA/State Public Agency is maintaining Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) timelines in collaboration with families and documenting delivered IEP services in correctional facilities; and
- f. The manner in which the LEA/State Public Agency delivers specialized instruction and related services for students across all settings.

NA

Effective Use of Funds in the 2021-22 School Year

19. LEAs receiving ESSER III-ARP funds only: Describe the extent to which and how ESSER III-ARP funds will be used to implement prevention and mitigation strategies that are, to the greatest extent practicable, consistent with the most recent OSSE and DC Health [guidance](#) on reopening schools, in order to continuously and safely open and operate schools for in-person learning.

N/A

20. LEAs receiving ESSER III-ARP funds only: Describe how the LEA will use at least 20 percent of its [allocation](#) for evidence-based interventions⁶ to address the academic impact of lost instructional time, such as such as summer learning or summer enrichment, extended day, comprehensive afterschool programs, or extended school year. Your description should include the planned approach for using at least 20 percent of your total ESSER III-ARP allocation, even if you do not plan to spend all the funds in the 2021-22 school year.

N/A

21. LEAs receiving ESSER III-ARP funds only: Describe how the LEA will spend its remaining ESSER III-ARP funds consistent with the allowable uses⁷ of the funding.

N/A

22. LEAs receiving ESSER III-ARP funds only: Describe how the LEA will ensure that the interventions it implements to address the academic impact of lost instructional time will respond to the academic, social, emotional and mental health needs of students disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, including students from low-income families, students of color, English learners, children with disabilities, students experiencing homelessness, children in foster care and migrant students.

N/A

SY 2021-22 Continuous Learning Plan Assurance Statement

The LEA attests to the following statements regarding delivery of instruction:

- The LEA grounds instruction in the District of Columbia's approved state academic standards (and/or the LEA's approved standards) in English language arts, math, and science across grades K-12.
- The LEA attests to completing the ELA curriculum materials survey coinciding with the submission of the CEP.

The LEA attests to the following statement regarding 2021-22 school year attendance:

- The LEA assures that it will collect and report daily attendance through the LEA's student information system (SIS) consistent with OSSE's regulations and policies for 2021-22.

The LEA attests to the following statement regarding graduation and promotion for 2021-22:

- The LEA assures that it will abide by the statewide graduation requirements enumerated in 5A DCMR § 220310 and/or in accordance with its charter agreement - if applicable.

The LEA attests to the following statements regarding serving students with disabilities, including students in non-public special education school settings (please check all boxes):

- Students with disabilities have equitable access to distance and in-person learning opportunities as possible in accordance with the guidance above and issued by the US Department of Education.
- LEAs will ensure timely completion of IDEA procedures, including but not limited to initial and reevaluation for eligibility and IEP development and revision, in both distance and in-person learning models.
- LEAs will ensure that school professionals delivering IEP services to the student regularly communicate with families throughout any periods of distance learning. Consistent and clear communication encourages parent and student participation in distance learning, in-person learning, recovery service delivery, and other educational opportunities.
- LEAs will ensure recovery planning and implementation includes identification of strategies, systems and protocols to support implementation of all elements of recovery plans, as well as addresses overdue initial and reevaluations for eligibility, IEP revisions and all other IDEA-prescribed timelines delayed due to school closures.
- LEAs will ensure recovery planning and implementation includes strategies to assess students with disabilities, formally or informally, to determine a baseline measurement for recovery service delivery, as well as strategies to address any identified student regression and loss of educational benefit. These strategies will take into consideration and seek to address the achievement gap of students with disabilities in comparison to their non-disabled peers prior to loss of services due to school closure.
- During the 2021-22 school year, the LEA will conduct school-wide and student-level recovery planning and implementation efforts to address student loss of educational benefit for students with disabilities. The LEA's recovery planning and implementation will include convening IEP teams, as appropriate, to review the impact of interrupted instruction for students with disabilities.

The LEA attests to the following statements regarding serving English learners (please check all boxes):

- The LEA will ensure that English learner students are identified in a timely manner as required by state policies and guidance identified above.
- The LEA will develop a plan for ensuring continuity of its English learner program and services to all English learner students across both distance and in-person learning environments,
- The LEA will monitor implementation to ensure that English learner services and access to grade-level content classes are advancing English learners' language and academic goals.

The LEA attests to the following statement regarding technology:

- The LEA will ensure that, to the extent its distance learning program uses technology, each student will have access to a device and internet connectivity sufficient to fully participate in the school's learning program.

The LEA attests to the following statements regarding family, stakeholder and public engagement (please check all boxes):

- The LEA has given the public an opportunity to provide input in the development of the CEP and engaged in meaningful consultation with a broad group of stakeholders. Specifically, the LEA has engaged in meaningful consultation with students; families; school and district administrators (including special education administrators); and teachers, principals, school leaders, other educators, school staff and their unions; civil rights organizations (including disability rights organizations); and stakeholders representing the interests of children with disabilities, English learners, children experiencing homelessness, children in foster care, migrant students, children who are incarcerated, and other underserved students.
- The LEA has taken comments of the above-named groups into account in the development of the CEP.
- The LEA will ensure translation of family-facing documents into the major non-English language(s) spoken by families served by the LEA, consistent with DC Code §2-1931, et seq
- The LEA will provide, upon request by a parent who is an individual with a disability, an alternative format of the plan accessible to that parent.
- The LEA will ensure publication, in a conspicuous place on its website, of the following resources by the beginning of school during the 2021-22 school year and provide families awareness of:
 - An accessible, family-facing description of their continuous education plan and health and safety plan for the 2021-22 school year, in an understandable and uniform format; and
 - Contact information of key points of contact including technical support, language access, school administrators, faculty and staff.
- The LEA, if receiving ESSER III-ARP funds, will ensure publication on its web site, by June 24, 2021, their CEP from last school year (2020-21), if not already posted.
- The LEA, if receiving ESSER III-ARP funds, will update the 2021-22 school year CEP every six months, at a minimum, between the date of publication and Sept. 30, 2023.

The LEA attests to the following statement regarding locally administered assessments:

- The LEA ensures that the information reported herein is accurate to the best of its knowledge, and the LEA will ensure that it will administer assessments equitably to all students and will communicate the results of locally administered assessments to students' families.