



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

OFFICE OF THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF

**EDUCATION**

## **Coronavirus (COVID-19) Distance Learning Implementation Plan & School Calendars Waiver**

In response to coronavirus (COVID-19), DC Public Schools and DC public charter schools have closed school buildings and moved to distance learning. The purpose of this document is to obtain LEA distance learning implementation plans used during school closures during the 2019-20 school year. In addition, an LEA may seek a waiver of the requirement that a school year shall include a minimum of 180 instructional days, at 6 hours per day as prescribed in 5-A DCMR §2100.3.<sup>1,2</sup>

LEA distance learning implementation plans and 180 instructional day waivers must be completed and sent to OSSE's deputy chief of staff, Justin Tooley at [Justin.Tooley@dc.gov](mailto:Justin.Tooley@dc.gov) by May 4, 2020 and will be reviewed on a rolling basis.

### ***Part I: Distance Learning Implementation Plan***

To support student instruction during this period, many LEAs and schools have worked to ensure educational continuity through distance learning. LEAs should submit a plan describing their efforts, if any, to provide distance learning during this period. Plans should respond to each of the questions posed below.

#### ***Instructions for Public Charter LEAs***

Public charter LEAs have already submitted responses to questions 1-9 to the PCSB. If the information submitted has not changed, please indicate by checking the box below. OSSE will obtain this information from the PCSB on your behalf. If the information has changed, please update it with the most up-to-date information in your submission. Public charter LEAs are expected to respond to the remaining questions.

Responses to questions 1-9 have not changed; please use responses submitted to PCSB.

#### **Instructional Continuity**

1. Please describe your plan for ensuring students will be able to access your educational programming for core content classes in the event of a long-term school closure. In your description, please explain, in detail, the methods for delivering instruction to students in their homes (e.g., online, paper materials, etc.).

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<sup>1</sup> 5-A DCMR 2100.3. Unless otherwise approved by OSSE, a school year for attendance purposes shall include a minimum of one hundred eighty (180) regular instructional days and the following requirements: (a) An instructional day shall be at least six (6) hours in length for students, including time allotted for lunch periods, recess, and class breaks; (b) The six (6)-hour minimum instructional day requirement shall not apply to an evening school program, prekindergarten program, or kindergarten program.

<sup>2</sup> 5-A DCMR §2100.3 does not apply to Pre-K 3 and Pre-K 4 and adult programs. LEAs serving only these grades do not need to apply for a 180-day waiver.

2. If your plan depends on the widespread distribution of materials (e.g., delivering work packets, Chromebooks, or other resources to be used at home), please describe how you will distribute those. Please also describe how you plan to maintain active communication with families during a long-term closure.
3. If your plan depends on students having internet access to complete work, please describe how you will identify and accommodate students who do not have access to the internet at home.
4. Please describe how you will train and support teachers and other school staff in both creating and delivering remote coursework in the event of a long-term closure. Please also describe how you will train and support families delivering remote coursework.

### **Monitoring Student Participation & Progress**

5. Please describe, at a high level, the types of assignments students will complete, how you will ensure that coursework is aligned to your educational program, and how coursework will be tailored to students' needs (including students with disabilities and English learners). Finally, please explain how you will assess student learning.
6. Please elaborate on how you are assessing student participation in distance learning.
  - a. Please describe, in detail, the touchpoints you are using to assess student participation and how you are tracking this information.
  - b. Please also explain how you are tracking students who, to date, have not engaged with distance learning, and describe any interventions you are using to reengage those students.
7. Describe how you are measuring student learning during this time. Please describe, in detail, the methods of assessment you are using (e.g. exit tickets, teacher-designed quizzes, etc.) to see that students are making academic progress through distance learning and how you are providing that information back to students and families.

### **Supporting Special Populations**

8. Please elaborate on the following areas of support for students/families with limited English proficiency:
  - a. How you are providing language assistance, in English and/or the home language, to English learners during distance learning. Please describe, in detail, how you are giving students access to academic content and language instruction across the four language domains of reading, writing, listening, and speaking that is aligned to their levels of English proficiency.
  - b. What steps you are taking to ensure that non-English speaking family members can access content to support their students' learning?
9. Please elaborate on the following areas of support for students/families with disabilities:
  - a. How you are implementing student IEPs and 504 plans, including for students with intensive levels of support and/or service hours. In your response, please distinguish between specialized instruction and related services?
  - b. How you are maintaining IDEA timelines in collaboration with families and documenting delivered services?
  - c. What steps you are taking to determine whether, and to what extent, compensatory services will be offered once school resumes?

- d. What steps you are taking to ensure that family members with disabilities (e.g. a guardian with visual impairment) can access content to support their students' learning?
10. If schools are closed due to coronavirus (COVID-19) and offering any educational opportunity including distance learning, the LEA must ensure that students with disabilities have equal access to such opportunities. OSSE issued [guidance](#) related to IDEA Part B and the provision of FAPE during COVID-19 on March 12, 2020. OSSE also released an [FAQ document](#) on this topic on March 25, 2020. The LEA should review that guidance document in its entirety and provide the following assurances:
- a. Students with disabilities have equal access to distance learning opportunities as possible and described in the guidance above and issued by US Department of Education;
  - b. When school resumes, the LEA will convene IEP teams, as appropriate, to review the impact of the lapse in services for students with disabilities, including making an individualized determination as to whether or not compensatory education services are needed; and
  - c. The delivery of distance learning and any waiver of instructional days does not exempt the LEA of compensatory education responsibilities to students with disabilities as assured in the second bullet point above.

The LEA assures to the statements above.

### Student Grades

11. Describe how the LEA will make student promotion decisions for this school year. Be sure to describe how student work before the emergency will be used in making decisions as well as work completed through distance learning.

We will follow our previous policy for retention, and will use Trimester 1 and Trimester 2 data when making the decision with work completed during distance learning as a secondary consideration. Our policy currently requires retention teams to meet to make individualized decisions, with teams consisting of the school leader, teachers, and the parent to make a holistic decision about the course of action that would be in the best interests of the student. Final decisions and instructions for appeal are sent to families in May, with appeals considered and finalized in June.

12. Describe how the LEA has communicated or will communicate grading policies and promotion decisions to families and on what timeline.

Meridian communicated policies on grading and promotion decisions to parents by email, text, and robocall on April 24. We also posted an FAQ that contained grading and other questions that families have had on our school's website.

13. For LEAs with high schools: Describe the policy used to award credits required for graduation.

N/A

### Supporting Students After the Emergency

*The purpose of this section is to inform city-wide planning for recovery. OSSE understands that LEAs may be in the planning phase when examining these questions. LEAs should outline their preliminary thoughts to these questions.*

14. How is your LEA planning to support students who missed learning time following the extended closure (e.g., summer school or planning for next school year)?

We are actively reviewing guidance on summer school programming and are considering both in-person summer school for limited populations of students along with remote learning opportunities. Our contract with the adaptive learning platform i-Ready continues throughout the summer and we will provide guidance on how students can continue to work on the platform even without consistent teacher guidance to promote continued student learning outside of school.

In the next school year, keeping in mind that we are likely only going to open for subsets of our students, we are working to identify the groups of students that would benefit most from in-person learning compared to remote learning so that we can bring them back first. Our school year will begin with a battery of assessments, including academic and socioemotional assessments, to understand our students' needs and using that data we will act accordingly. Meridian has already begun planning a series of contingency plans to take as many potential eventualities into account so we are ready to act when our data comes in.

15. Are you planning to use formative or diagnostic assessments to identify student learning gaps, particularly in reading and math, at the start of the 2020-21 school year? If yes, please select any that apply and describe how you are considering using these options.

- Achievement Network (ANet)
- Affirm
- Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA)
- DIBELS/Acadience Reading
- Great Minds
- i-Ready – Curriculum Associates
- NWEA-MAP
- Reading Inventory (RI)
- Renaissance Learning's STAR Reading/STAR Math
- Scholastic Reading/Math Inventory (SRI/SMI)
- Other Vendor Created Non-Summative Assessment (please specify)
- Other LEA- or School-Developed Non-Summative Assessment (please specify) - **Throughout the year, we will continue to use regular interim assessments to assess student progress on newly taught material that also incorporates material from the previous year to identify opportunities for remediation.**
- Other Practice (please specify)

16. What steps will the LEA take to review policies, processes, and systems to improve the implementation of distance learning in the future?

Meridian will continue to conduct surveys of staff, students, and parents to determine areas of strength and areas to improve for future distance learning efforts. With the school year ending on June 12, we plan to use the final week of teacher duty to engage in deep reflection and planning for remote learning initiatives in the future.

## Part II: School Calendar Waiver

District regulation 5-A DCMR §2100.3 requires that all schools shall include a minimum of one hundred eighty (180) regular instructional days of six hours each unless otherwise approved by OSSE. We know that schools may have challenges in meeting the requirements for 180 instructional days this school year.

The LEA must select **ONE** of the following options by highlighting the text and providing additional information as relevant (for options 2 and 3):

### OPTION 1:

*In the instance where an LEA believes that its distance learning is equivalent to the 6 hours of instruction per day requirement, select Option 1, by highlighting the text below.*

The LEA **IS NOT** seeking a waiver from the 180 instructional days requirement in 5-A DCMR §2100.3. The LEA has provided distance learning during the public health emergency sufficient to meet the 180 days of 6 hours of instruction per day requirement with its distance learning plan, as described above.

### OPTION 2:

*In the instance where an LEA is providing 180 days of instruction, however, it needs a waiver from the requirement that it provide instruction equivalent to the 6 hours per day, select Option 2, by highlighting the text below and providing the additional information requested.*

The LEA **IS** seeking a waiver of the 180 instructional days requirement in 5-A DCMR §2100.3. The LEA has provided distance learning during the public health emergency, for less than the 6 hours of minimum instruction for those days. The LEA seeks a waiver for that instructional time.

- Number of Instructional Days in 2019-20 school year Calendar: 196.5
- Number of Instructional Days Completed Before March 16, 2020: 130.5
- Number of Days of when Distance Learning was provided at less than 6 hours per day: 55
- Number of Days Requested to be Waived from 6 hours of learning: 49.5

### OPTION 3:

*In the instance where an LEA has provided some distance learning but also is not providing 180 days of instruction (for reasons such as substituting PD days for some instructional days during the transition to distance learning or changing the calendar to end the school year early), select Option 3 by highlighting the text below and providing the additional information requested.*

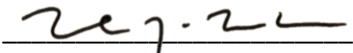
The LEA **IS** seeking a waiver of the 180 instructional days requirement in 5-A DCMR §2100.3. The LEA has provided distance learning during the public health emergency, for less than the 6 hours of minimum instruction for those days. Additionally, there are some days during the COVID-19 emergency for which the LEA did not or will not provide instruction, via in-person or distance learning. The LEA also seeks a waiver for that instructional time.

- Number of Instructional Days in 2019-20 school year Calendar: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Number of Instructional Days Completed Before March 16, 2020: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Number of Days of Distance Learning Provided: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Number of Days Requested to be Waived from 6 hours of learning: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Number of Days Requested to be Waived from providing instruction: \_\_\_\_\_
- o Indicate which calendar days being requested for waiver on which instruction was not provided: \_\_\_\_\_

By submitting this distance learning plan and signing below, LEA requests a waiver from the 180 instructional days requirement in 5-A DCMR §2100.3 for the days noted above, due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

LEA Name: Meridian Public Charter School

LEA Leader Name: Matthew McCrea

LEA Leader Signature: 

Date: May 4, 2020



Meridian Public Charter School  
Instructional Contingency Plan

**1. Please describe your plan for ensuring students will be able to access your educational programming for core content classes in the event of a long -term school closure. In your description, please explain, in detail, the methods for delivering instruction to students in their homes (e.g., online, paper materials, etc.).**

For PreK students, we've created a website containing a number of instructional activities families can complete at home with their students every day. Some activities are parent -driven, such as instructional games they can play with their students, and other activities are teacher -driven, such as read alouds that students can watch to mimic being in the classroom. Teacher-driven activities have been pre-recorded for students to do at home to ensure access to quality literacy materials each day during the closure. Students are receiving enough material to provide for 2-4 hours of instructional engagement per day.

For K-8 students, we have established a Google Classroom for each class section of students through which content will be delivered. We are assuming that each student has access to a smartphone with internet access given the results of our survey, but we provided a set of printed work to all students on Friday, March 13 and will have additional paper copies of assignments to pick up on an "as needed" basis for students without a smartphone at home to use. To the extent possible, we will follow our standard curriculum for each grade level and content area. For grades K-5, we are aiming for several hours of student work each day comprising video lessons with teachers and content providers and independent work that the students will complete and submit to teachers for feedback. For grades 6 -8, we are aiming for 30-45 minutes per day of independent work for each content area in addition to video lessons and other activities, for a total of 3 -5 hours of work each day.

We are also using online lessons from established providers, including i-Ready, Khan Academy, and Zern to supplement teacher-generated instructional content.



**2. If your plan depends on widespread distribution of materials (e.g., delivering work packets, Chromebooks, or other resources to be used at home), please describe how you will distribute those. Please also describe how you plan to maintain active communication with families during a long-term closure.**

We distributed materials on March 13, so we do not need any additional materials distribution for the remainder of the month of March. Instead, we will continue to communicate with parents and families to determine targeted homes that need support, whether that's through paper materials to work on or other technology. In those cases, we will either deliver the materials directly to the parents if practical or provide times on specific days for parents to retrieve the materials from Meridian.

Every student will receive at least two calls from a teacher throughout the week - the first by the middle of the week and the second by the end of the week. The calls will be to provide students with assistance on classwork, to ask questions about the student's wellness, and to provide updates to the family. If any issues are identified, or the teacher is unable to get in touch with a family, then the teacher will report that to administration for further action. We have also communicated to families that they can reach out to a central Meridian email address

**3. If your plan depends on students having internet access to complete work, please describe how you will identify and accommodate for students who do not have access to internet at home.**

A survey conducted of Meridian families shows that a large portion of families have smartphone access, so we've based on instructional plans on just having a smartphone at home. For families without internet access, we've provided paper copies of the first week of work and will organize opportunities throughout the extended break for families to pick up work packets if necessary. We are also working with students and families to get them set up with internet access at home for the free Comcast Internet Essentials program and will keep in touch with families throughout that period of time through the twice-weekly phone calls to ensure students have access to learning materials.

**4. Please describe, at a high level, the types of assignments students will complete, how you will ensure that coursework is aligned to your educational program, and how coursework will be tailored to students' needs (including students with disabilities and English learners). Finally, please explain how you will assess student learning.**





In PreK, students will have access to a number of learning activities to complete at home with their parents to keep them engaged instructionally while at home through read alouds conducted by teachers over YouTube, numeracy practice at home, and practice with developing writing skills. We have also provided families with instructional games to keep students engaged in productive play at home.

In K-8 assignments will follow our standard curriculum (CKLA and Eureka for K-5, Amplify ELA and Illustrative Math for 6-8). We also use TCI and STEMScopes for Social Studies and Science. We have provided access to all of our curriculum online so that students can access the material as though they were in the classroom. Amplify ELA and Illustrative Math are already online, so the student experience mimics the classroom experience closely.

Lesson plans will be submitted by Wednesday of the week before lessons will be delivered so that feedback can be given by supervisors and ELL and SPED teachers have appropriate time to make accommodations. SPED and ELL teachers will also check in twice a week with students to ensure they have the support needed to complete the work that's expected. We will also build in assessments of student learning through platforms that we already use, primarily through Google Classroom.

**5. Please describe how you will train and support teachers and other school staff in both creating and delivering remote coursework in the event of a long-term closure. Please also describe how you will train and support families delivering remote coursework.**

We have had several trainings on delivering remote coursework, including how to create a Google Classroom and how to create YouTube videos to deliver instruction. The training dates were on Thursday, March 12 and we closed school on Monday, March 16 to provide additional PD and support to teachers. We will continue to provide support both individually and through our team structures to teachers so they are supported throughout any extended closure.

Families will have a series of tutorials and videos on our remote learning landing page to assist them with using the technology needed to engage in remote learning.

**6. Please describe how you will ensure compliance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and Section 504 during a long-term closure. Please describe, in detail, how you will ensure continuity of services for students during this time and, if necessary, provide additional academic supports upon students' return.**



Students with IEPs and 504s will have twice -weekly phone calls with teachers to ensure they are receiving the appropriate supports to complete academic work, and will also receive modified assignments according to the provisions in their IEPs.

Any students receiving support from Related Service Providers (counseling, occupational therapy, speech/language services) will receive virtual support that will be logged on SEDS as needed, per their service hours. If needed, we will transition some virtual support to in -person support that parents can bring their students to.

Any MDT meetings to be held during the closure time to meet deadlines will be held virtually, when possible. It should be noted that during the closure some special education testing cannot be completed without access to students in the learning environment. In such cases, the testing will resume when classes resume.



## **Instructional Contingency Plan Update**

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, LEAs have been asked to implement Instructional Contingency Plans to ensure students have access to learning at home. Schools shared initial information about their plans with DC PCSB on March 17. The questions below ask LEAs to share an update about the implementation of their plans and to elaborate further on specific areas.

- 1) What adjustments, if any, have you made to your Instructional Contingency Plan since the initial March 17 submission to DC PCSB?

Meridian has made several adjustments to our plan since the original submission.

### *Tracking class participation and assignment completion*

- We track live class attendance by student and aggregate that data by grade levels and different demographic subgroups
- We track assignment completion (complete, incomplete, and not submitted) and aggregate the data by grade levels and different demographic subgroups
- If a student attends the majority of live classes or teacher office hours in a given week, the teacher only reaches out to provide individualized support to the student once a week instead of the previous twice a week

### *Special Education Students*

- We track the implementation of IEPs and the achievement of IEP goals on a weekly basis and follow up with teachers and students as needed.
- Students with IEP goals that are fully-aligned to grade-level standards participate in general education instruction, with additional support provided weekly by case managers during office hours and phone calls
- Students with IEP goals that are not aligned to grade-level standards only complete some general education work, and spend the remainder of the instructional minutes each week working on IEP goals with case managers
- Students continue to receive support from related service providers, as appropriate, and we attempt to provide support identical to what students would receive in-person if possible
- General education teachers use UDL principles to provide accommodations during live teaching sessions to meet accommodations necessary for all students to access instructional material

### *ELL Students*

- Level 1 and Level 2 students in K-2 do not participate in general education instruction, but instead, work with their case managers on language acquisition skills in live instruction and phone calls



- Level 3 and Level 4 students in K-2 and all ELL students in grades 3-8 participate fully in general education and have weekly phone calls or office hours with case managers to provide additional support in accessing the curriculum
  - General education teachers use UDL principles to provide accommodations during live teaching sessions to meet accommodations necessary for all students to access instructional material. General education teachers also collaborate with special education teachers and ELL teachers to modify assignments as appropriate.
- 2) Please elaborate on how you are measuring student learning during this time. Please describe, in detail, the methods of assessment you are using (e.g. exit tickets, teacher-designed quizzes, etc.) to see that students are making academic progress through distance learning.

Beginning next week, each teacher will assess students at the end of the week with a 10-15 minute quiz covering material taught that week. Teachers will report the scores for each student on the quiz to our school tracker for analysis and debrief with school leaders and instructional coaches.

Special Education students will have similar weekly assessments aligned to the IEP goals covered that week (unless a performance task during instruction or one-on-one support is more appropriate) that will be reported to our tracker as well.

- 3) Please elaborate on how you are assessing student participation in distance learning. Please describe, in detail, the touchpoints you are using to assess student participation and how you are tracking this information.
- Please also explain how you are tracking students who, to date, have not engaged with distance learning, and describe any interventions you are using to reengage those students.

We are currently in contact with each student at Meridian. We maintain a form for teachers to report when phones are disconnected or other needs arise from families that is actively monitored by school leaders and our family center. Teachers are required to track student attendance in live classes and office hours on a Google document, and phone calls are tracked in DeansList before being aggregated by our data manager for analysis. Each week, we look at the students with minimal participation in distance learning and contact with teachers and follow up with those families to eliminate barriers to participation. We've also distributed about 150 laptops and plan to distribute approximately 200 more over the next week.



4) Please elaborate on the following areas of support for students/families with disabilities:

- How you are implementing student IEPs and 504 plans, including for students with intensive levels of support and/or service hours. In your response, please distinguish between specialized instruction and related services.
- How you are maintaining IDEA timelines in collaboration with families and documenting delivered services.
- What steps you are taking to determine whether, and to what extent, compensatory services will be offered once school resumes.
- What steps you are taking to ensure that family members with disabilities (e.g. a guardian with visual impairment) are able to access content to support their students' learning.

Meridian is implementing 504s and IEPs as follows:

- 504 and IEP accommodations during live instruction are provided by general education teachers using UDL principles. All students are also given extended time to complete assignments. Special education co-teachers also check in with students weekly through phone calls and office hours for additional support as needed.
- Related service providers have set up schedules for providing teletherapy, where practical (physical therapy services and some occupational therapy services cannot be provided, for instance). RSPs are logging contact on SEDS and are continuing to maintain service trackers on SEDS as well.
- We are working diligently to continue to hold meetings with parents either over the phone or over Zoom. If meetings are held up by evaluations, we are communicating the delay to parents and letting them know we will conduct the evaluations when we are back in school.
- When we are back in school, we will hold individual IEP meetings to determine the extent of compensatory services. Trackers for services provided along with progress to IEP goals should provide a wealth of information in making those decisions.
- When parents and guardians have special needs, we've made efforts to individually work with them to ensure they understand expectations and how to assist students at home. For instance, for a family in which the parents are deaf, we would have an interpreter to join a video call with the parent to ensure they have equitable access to the information. Teachers and staff are also available to read and explain directions to assignments on a targeted basis to families that may have difficulty accessing written content, whether that is due to a visual impairment or low literacy levels.

5) Please elaborate on the following areas of support for students/families with limited English proficiency:



- How you are providing language assistance, in both English and/or the home language, to English learners during distance learning. Please describe, in detail, how you are giving students access to academic content and language instruction across the four language domains of reading, writing, listening, and speaking that is aligned to their levels of English proficiency.
- What steps you are taking to ensure that non-English speaking family members are able to access content to support their students' learning.

Our adjusted instructional plans for ELL students are largely outlined in question #1. Additional information is below.

- Teachers are monitoring student progress on assignments that align with each instructional domain in general education classrooms. When a domain is less frequently assessed in general education, as is the case with the speaking domain, the teachers will assign additional work and assessments designed to help students progress on the four domains.
- Instructions for completing work in our youngest grades are on our website in both Spanish and English. Additionally, during our weekly calls to families, we utilize Language Link to help families understand how to assist their students with completing work remotely.

- 6) Broadly speaking, how is your school planning for in-person opportunities to make up for missed learning time following the extended closure (e.g. summer school)? If you have not yet made any decisions about make-up instructional time, what is your projected timeline for making decisions about this issue?
- If your school has already decided to offer in-person learning opportunities to make up for school closure, please elaborate on how and when such opportunities will be offered.

Meridian plans to make those decisions once more information is available about the length of the closure and when social distancing requirements will ease. We are currently exploring options for summer learning, after school tutoring, and Saturday school for targeted populations of students.