

BOARD OF EDUCATION OF HARFORD COUNTY

INFORMATIONAL REPORT

DECISION ON THE HCPS CONTINUITY OF LEARNING RECOVERY PLAN FOR 2020-2021

AUGUST 10, 2020

Background Information

The Coronavirus Pandemic (COVID-19) in the spring of 2020 forced all Maryland schools to close for the end of the 2019-2020 school year. Following the closure announcement by Dr. Karen Salmon, State Superintendent of Schools, immediate planning and discussion began around the eventual reopening of schools. The Maryland State Department of Schools (MSDE) has published a guidance document, *Maryland Together: Recovery Plan for Education*, to outline thirteen non-negotiables to include in local school system's final recovery plans.

Harford County Public Schools (HCPS) has prepared a plan that outlines the essential elements of beginning the 2020-2021 school year in a virtual distance learning format, *The HCPS Continuity of Learning Recovery Plan*.

Throughout the 2020 spring and summer, HCPS has communicated recovery plans with staff, students, families, and community members. HCPS presented an initial *Recovery Plan* to the HCPS Board of Education on July 13, 2020. Many public comments, questions, and concerns have been received and have been used to determine the final plan for the 2020-2021 school year.

Discussion

In a letter to our school community on July 16, 2020, Dr. Sean Bulson announced that Harford County Public Schools would implement a recovery plan that relies on virtual learning while providing opportunities for students who need a safe, supervised place during the school day.

The foundation of this plan is the assurance of four key elements:

- **Equity:** Assuring equity has been addressed as a component piece of each planning element.
- **Special Student Populations:** Providing intentional supports and plans for meeting student learning needs for targeted student populations.
- **Technology and Professional Learning:** Providing specific, ongoing support for staff, students, and families in the use of new devices, enhanced curriculum resources, and instructional pedagogy
- **Stakeholder Input:** Providing multiple opportunities for stakeholders (students, staff, families, community members) to provide input throughout the planning process

All instruction during the first semester will be virtual. Student devices will be provided for all students in pre-K- grade 12. All teachers have received a Window-based laptop. HCPS is currently undertaking trials of cellular hotspots throughout the county, to provide Internet access to all students. HCPS curriculum and professional development have been enhanced to ensure virtual instruction is more interactive and engaging than during the Spring of 2020.

To address the needs of students who require a safe place with reliable Internet access, HCPS is offering a limited number of spaces in HCPS Learning Support Centers. Students will be supervised by an HCPS employee while receiving virtual instructions from their teacher working from a remote location. These students will have access to bus transportation and Food and Nutrition services.

Input and feedback are important in developing a thoughtful and responsive plan. Various teams, comprised of HCPS staff, community members, and key stakeholders, continue to meet regularly to work through preparation for the 2020-2021 school year. Some of the topics include:

- Essential health and safety measures for students and staff
- Logistics for student schedules and transportation for students attending the Learning Support Centers
- Supporting social/emotional wellness for students and staff

The ultimate goal is for every student to return to in-person learning as soon as safety allows. HCPS will continue to seek ways to incrementally provide additional in-person experiences, particularly for our students with the greatest learning needs.

Superintendent's Recommendation

The Superintendent recommends the Board approve the *HCPS Continuity of Learning Recovery Plan*.