

DISTANCE LEARNING PLAN

Learning for All, Whatever it Takes



Introduction

Continuation of learning during school closure

On March 23rd, Governor Northam announced school closures for the remainder of the year. Preparation for closures had already begun within the Winchester Public Schools instructional department. In collaboration with administrators, teachers, and with guidance from the Virginia Department of Education, the instruction department began developing a plan to support students, staff, and families to continue learning for the remainder of the year.

Our plan for distance learning was guided by the following principles:

- Students have differing developmental considerations regarding screen time, attention spans, and independent learning, which should be addressed in teachers' instructional design; student access and support structures vary widely.
- Families and caregivers must provide learning supports, and establish scheduling learning times for their children that help avoid conflict with use of home resources; caregivers must also balance their work and family responsibilities during school closure.
- Teachers require time to develop lesson plans and collaborate with colleagues, time to provide guided instruction for students, time to check-in with students, and must balance their work and family responsibilities during school closure.
- School counselors, school psychologists, and school social workers require time to collaborate with colleagues, time to check in with students and families, and must balance their work and family responsibilities during school closure.



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Preparation & Planning

Commitment to continued learning

To ensure learning could continue during the school closure, the Winchester Public Schools instruction team developed plans for two phases of instruction:

Phase 1:

Planning, patience, and communication

- During Phase I, guidance on instruction and materials continued from the Curriculum & Instruction department and Specialists.
- Our K-8 families received choice board activities.
- During Phase I, no new material, no mandatory assignments, no grades, no deadlines, and no summative assessments were assigned.
- Teachers collected information from students and families on connectivity and resources at home.
- Teachers provided learning activities for students to engage in distance learning.

Phase 2:

Engaging, instructing, & continued learning

- During Phase II, Elementary and Secondary instruction began new plans for distance learning.

Elementary & Intermediate Instruction (Pk-6)

- Modified 4th quarter.
- Reteaching and review with daily assignments, activities, and lessons covering essential standards.
- Work sent home to families who opted for paper materials.
- Extension activities provided to students.

Secondary Instruction (7-12)

- Modified 4th quarter
- New content begins through modules in Google
- Classroom or instructional packets provided to students who need printed material.
- 4th quarter will be pass/fail
- High school credits will be awarded through successful completion of the course

Taking care of families

Food distribution & community outreach

Immediately following the first closure of school on March 13, Winchester Public School's Nutrition, Transportation, and Student Services departments along with the assistance of staff members worked to ensure our students and families would be taken care of with meals. Over 1,000 meals are given out each day.

Bright Futures of Winchester/Frederick County supports over 600 families with essential products and food.



Elementary & Intermediate Instruction

Continued Learning

Modified 4th Quarter

Starting Tuesday, April 14, 2020 and ending May 29, 2020, WPS began a modified 4th quarter for elementary and the intermediate students.

To help students, teachers create daily lessons and activities to reteach material, provide support, and offer extensions to learning. These lessons will be essential in preparing students for next year. Partnership and communication between schools and families is necessary as we use distance learning to engage our students.

Extension activities are also designed to challenge students to go deeper in their learning while learning grade level standards. 4th Quarter standards are being developed to be learned during next year's instructional year.

Students can work at their own pace and your child's teachers will give your child appropriate instruction and feedback on assignments to support mastery of the content. School work will not be graded.

Students with special needs

Continued services for IEPs, 504s, & ELL students

Classroom teachers, EL teachers, and Special Education teachers will modify student assignments based on students' learning goals and provide additional instruction as needed. Many IEPs were also modified to add distance learning. *Please communicate with your child's case manager or teacher with additional questions.*

Additional Instructional Opportunities

Resources available to students

K-6 students have accounts in [Dreambox](#) for math instruction that is personalized to each student. K-4 students have accounts in [Lexia](#) for language arts instruction that is personalized to each student. These resources are online resources and excellent instructional tools to continue learning. Reading everyday is essential for all students to continue learning. Our libraries, including the Handley Regional Library, have books available online for students to read.

Resources & Materials

Available Learning Materials

A number of resources are available on our [FAQ](#) to families who may need internet access. These have been graciously made available to our community during this time of social distancing. Paper copies of learning activities are available to families who [request](#) them and are also available on our distance learning [website](#). Chromebooks were distributed to students in grades 3, 4, and 5 who requested additional devices.

Grading

All work completed by students will not be graded. Feedback will be provided to students by teachers. Report cards will be sent home with completed grades from the first three quarters of the school year.



Secondary Instruction

Continued Learning

Modified 4th Quarter

Starting Tuesday, April 14, 2020 and ending May 29, 2020, WPS began a modified 4th quarter for elementary and the intermediate students.

To help students, teachers will be creating modules/units to teach material for the 4th quarter. These modules/units will be designed to be completed in six weeks or less with the expectation that students provide teachers with evidence that they know the material.

Students can work at their own pace and as students complete the modules/units they will be done with the course. Your child's teachers will give your child appropriate feedback on assignments/assessments to demonstrate mastery of 4th quarter material.

4th Quarter grades will be Pass/Fail. Teachers will evaluate student work from the previous quarter(s) and will determine the student's grade for the course. The final course grade will be a letter grade.

The Promotion/Retention policy will be in effect based on grades from Quarter 1-3 and the pass/fail status from Quarter 4. Students may require summer school if they do not demonstrate adequate performance during the 4th Quarter or if promotion standards have not been met.

Course Credits

What is the status of students enrolled in high school credit courses graduating in 2020 and 2021 or after? What is the school division doing to ensure that students receive instruction in missing content and skills?

School divisions must award standard credit for high school credit-bearing courses by ensuring that students have completed a majority of required standards, competencies, and objectives, including those that are essential for success in subsequent coursework. The secondary instructional department will work to identify the specific content in core content areas that had not been taught as of Friday, March 13, 2020. This team has developed an equitable plan to incorporate the missing content in core content areas into the curriculum for all students. This will require an adjustment to grade-level curricula and pacing.

Still learning...

Per the Governor's order, all WPS schools will remain closed through the end of this academic year.

This decision is to close our school buildings and should not be interpreted that our instructional year is over. Students still need to complete coursework to finish their courses and the academic year.

Students with special needs

Continued services for IEPs, 504s, & ELL students

Classroom teachers, EL teachers, and Special Education teachers will modify student assignments based on students' learning goals and provide additional instruction as needed. Many IEPs were also modified to add distance learning. *Please communicate with your child's case manager or teacher with additional questions.*

Secondary Instruction continued...

SOL Testing

Will students still take the Standards of Learning (SOL) tests?

No. Superintendent of Public Instruction James Lane directed Virginia Department of Education staff to prepare an application to the US Department of Education for a statewide waiver from federal requirements related to student testing. This waiver has been approved and there will be no SOL tests 3-12.

GPA

How will grade point averages be determined?

The authority to determine grade point averages rests with local school divisions. WPS will establish a methodology to fairly calculate grades based on work previously completed and a methodology for including grades in GPA calculations and on student transcripts. WPS will work closely with VDOE if we feel additional flexibility is needed within the transcript regulations.



AP Courses

What is the status of Advanced Placement (AP) courses?

The College Board made an announcement on March 20, 2020 regarding the status of AP exams. The College Board will proceed with modified at-home exams. We will provide more information on how this will work as we are notified. WPS will be paying for the costs associated with these exams as in prior years.

According to School Board Policy IZA, students must participate in the Advanced Placement exam in order to receive weighted quality points for their GPA calculation. We will continue to work with the VDOE and our college partners to answer your questions. Our continued goal as we work through this difficult time is to provide all students with equitable outcomes that ensure academic and career readiness.

Dual Enrollment

What is the status of Dual Enrollment courses?

We are working closely with Lord Fairfax Community College to determine options for completing the college portion of the course. WPS can determine the completion of the high school portion of the course.

Access to learning

With the changes to the fourth quarter, we also want to prepare for any student who may not be able to access content or is not able to engage in distance learning for any reason. Our priority is to ensure that students receive the instruction they need to move to the next grade level.

Therefore, we are planning a summer school session in July for some students. Students who have not demonstrated proficiency in their current classes will have an opportunity for in-person support through a summer session in order to be fully prepared for the 2020 - 2021 school year. Obviously, this will be dependent on conditions related to the Coronavirus.

Secondary Instruction continued...

Graduation

What is the status of students scheduled to graduate in 2020?

To be eligible to graduate students need either 22 credits for a standard diploma or 26 credits for an advanced diploma. Additionally, students need to pass a certain number of associated Standards of Learning (SOL) tests. When students pass certain courses and the associated SOL tests they earn a verified credit in that course. Currently, Advanced Diplomas require nine verified credits while standard diplomas require six verified credits. Standard Diplomas also require a Career Technical Education credential.

The State Superintendent has provided us with flexibility to consider the needs of students facing barriers to graduation. For the Class of 2020, the Superintendent of Public Instruction has waived the following graduation requirements:

- Students currently enrolled in a course for which they need a standard and verified credit in order to graduate;
- Students who have successfully completed a course required for graduation, but have not earned the associated verified credit;
- Students who have not completed the student-selected test;
- Students who are currently enrolled in or have previously completed a course leading to a CTE credential necessary for a Standard Diploma but have not yet earned the credential;
- Students who have not completed a United States and Virginia history course;
- Students who have not completed a fine or performing arts or career and technical education course;
- Students in the second of sequential courses
- Students who have not completed an economics and personal finance course.

Counselors will work with individual students on some of these items as they may require some additional work although less than the current requirement.

*Graduation activities are dependent upon social distancing expectations and with guidance from VDOE



Distance Teaching

Professional Development

How are teachers being supported to teach in distance learning?

Teachers are being supported in a number of ways by our instructional specialists, directors, coordinators, principals, assistant principals, instructional coaches, and our instructional technology resource teachers (ITRT). Teachers meet virtually with their teams and support staff to trouble shoot, plan lessons, and engage in discussion.

As we progress during this new time, it will be essential to offer continued professional development on working with distance learning procedures and programs. Google Classroom is an important component of engaging with students in grade 3-12 while our younger students use various applications to engage with their teachers through parent communication. Professional development will continue to evolve as we complete the 4th quarter of learning.

Technology Services

What additional resources are being provided?

Devices: Our technology department has been working closely with directors, coordinators, and principals to ensure students have access to our distance learning. We have distributed chromebooks to grade 3-5 families who requested those resources to assist in learning at home.

Internet Access: A number of resources are available on our [FAQ](#) to families who may need internet access. These have been graciously made available to our community during this time of social distancing.

Internet Safety: Our technology department also ensures the [online safety](#) of our students. Securly and Gaggie are the safety monitoring systems in place for students. Leaders in Winchester Public Schools and the Winchester Police Department work collaboratively to support families regarding the monitoring systems in place and protecting students from misuse and websites not approved by WPS.

Support: The technology department is also offering onsite technology support and repair office hours.

WHEN: Mondays and Thursdays, 12:00 pm - 4:00 pm

WHERE: Central Administration Office, 12 N. Washington Street
Please enter the parking lot behind the building and look for the signs (garage door entrance at back of building).

Technology staff will be onsite during these times to troubleshoot and repair WPS issued devices, including chromebooks, for students and staff.

PHONE SUPPORT: 540-667-4253, Ext. 10200 During Support Center hours



WPS TECHNOLOGY

For information on exterior WiFi access to the WPS network and information on additional WiFi access and resources visit the [WPS WiFi Access page on our website](#).

More Info...

Visit our [COVID-19 webpage](#), dedicated to updating families with our latest released information.

Visit our [Distance Learning webpage](#), dedicated to updating families with our latest instructional supports & resources.

For questions or comments, contact your building principal or child's teacher.

Visit the [Virginia Department of Education](#) for additional information.

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4.20.2020