

NASSAU COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

2020 – 2021

RETURN-TO-SCHOOL PLAN

DRAFT

Superintendent

Dr. Kathy Burns

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INTRODUCTION

This plan is based on current conditions in Nassau County and on the most recent guidelines and rules issued by the Florida Department of Education. The district's goal is getting our students, teachers, and support staff back to school, with our number one priority being their health and safety.

Over the past six weeks the district has been putting the pieces in place to ensure students are able to begin school on August 10th, either in person or through distance learning. The work began with the Superintendent developing a Task Force and several work groups. The Task Force included local health care providers, local elected officials, local law enforcement officers, business owners, parents, teachers, and the local Health Department.

This plan is based on the work of the Task Force and work groups and draws heavily from the "Reopening Florida's Schools and CARES Act" report produced by the Florida Department of Education.

The plan remains in "draft" form for now to allow for changes in state guidance or rules that could occur due to everchanging conditions. And to allow for further review and input from stakeholders. We do not foresee major changes and the core elements of the plan, including the educational options available, should not change. Any changes that are made will be communicated via our website and social media platform. The plan in its completed form will be presented at the July 23rd School Board meeting.

Part 2 of the plan describes the safety initiatives the district will put in place for traditional "Brick and Mortar" school. Part 4 of the plan describes the two distance learning options the district will provide, "School-Based Distance Learning" and "Nassau Virtual".

PART 1 CLOSING ACHIEVEMENT GAP – SUMMER PROGRAM

The GEER funds under the CARES Act are provided to LEAs to address the impact that the Novel Coronavirus Disease 2019 ("COVID-19") has had, and continues to have, on students in Florida. This includes developing and implementing summer recovery programs prioritizing target students with significant academic need defined as:

- Students who have been disconnected or hard to reach via distance learning.
- Grades K-3 students for 2019-2020 (1-4 for 2020-2021) identified with a substantial deficiency in reading based on the most recent available screening and progress monitoring assessment or other forms of assessment, and teacher recommendations; and K-3 students who may be at-risk of retention, and any third grade student with a substantial deficiency in reading must be prioritized.
- Grades 4-5 students who were level 1 or 2 on their most recent FSA and are served in the lowest 300 performing or D and F schools across the state will also be eligible for summer program options to enhance literacy skills in reading and math.
- School Sites: Hilliard Elementary, Callahan Elementary, Yulee Elementary, and Southside Elementary

PART 2 REOPENING HEALTHY LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

Mask

The importance of wearing masks in preventing the spread of COVID-19 has been well documented and is being recommended by public health officials at all levels. The school district's initial plan was for masks to be required for all students (PK – 12) on school buses, due to the inability to social distance on buses. PK – 5 students would

not be required to wear masks at school. Secondary students (grades 6 – 12) would be required to wear masks during transitions and when social distancing is not possible.

The recent decision by the Nassau County and City of Fernandina Beach Commissions mandating masks for everyone over the age of six while in public spaces could affect our initial plan. If this rule is still in place when school begins the district would follow the parameters set forth in the mandate.

Parents are encouraged to provide their students with their own masks. However, the district will provide masks for students who do not have them.

All district employees will wear masks and in some cases face shields.

Classrooms

Good hand hygiene will play a huge role in our ability to prevent spread of the virus. The importance of washing hands frequently and using hand sanitizer will be emphasized on an ongoing basis. Hand sanitizer will be available in all classrooms.

While six feet of distance between students will not be possible in most classrooms, desks and other furniture will be arranged to allow for as much distance as possible between students.

Classrooms will be sanitized, and surfaces disinfected with approved disinfectants on a daily basis.

Elementary cohorts of students will remain together throughout the day to reduce the number of interactions. All efforts will be made to keep small groups consistent, to minimize the number of students each student interacts with.

Students will not be sharing classroom materials.

Cafeteria

The cafeteria is obviously an area where large numbers of students are present at the same time. Since there is a limited amount of time (usually around two hours for lunch) to feed students and a limited amount of space, the cafeteria presents a challenge. However, there are many safeguards being implemented to help reduce the chances of the virus being spread during breakfast or lunch. For breakfast “grab and go” will be utilized to decrease the number of students in the cafeteria.

Social distancing will be difficult in the cafeteria at lunch due to the number of students and limited space and seating. Every effort will be made to maximize the distance between students. **(The district is exploring the feasibility/availability of purchasing plexiglass shields that would run down the center of the tables to provide protection for students sitting across from one another.)** Outdoor areas and other spaces will be utilized as much as possible to increase social distancing and close contact.

The Department of Food Services will be making extensive changes to day-to-day operations to help ensure the safety of students and employees:

- All food service personnel will be pre-screened and required to wear a mask and gloves while at work and will receive additional training related to COVID and proper cleaning, sanitation, and hand washing.

- Additional cleaning & sanitation in the kitchen and common areas were added.
- New signage in the kitchen and cafeteria for COVID prevention and to encourage social distancing.
- Social distancing will be practiced in the kitchen as much as possible.
- Hand sanitizer available at start of serving line/entry doors of cafeteria
- Sanitize tray slide/counter in between classes and/or groups
- Simplified menu and choices
- No self-service bars or shared utensils or condiment stations for students. All pre-packaged cutlery and disposable trays will be used.
- All food items will be wrapped or packaged or handed directly to the student from the food service employee.
- Minimize cash transactions in the cafeteria. We will encourage pre-payments or online payments for staff and parents. Cash will not be handled by food service employees during meal service.

BUSES

- Students will be required to wear a mask on the bus. Masks should be provided by the parent. However, a disposable mask will be provided if they forget or until they get one.
- All touch-point surfaces will be wiped down daily after the morning routes are completed.
- The bus will be sprayed with a viricide daily after the afternoon routes are completed.
- Hand sanitizer stations will be located at the entrance of each bus. Students will clean hands with hand sanitizer before entering the bus.
- Positive fresh air circulation will be established on non-ESE buses by having a front and rear window opened.
- Students will be assigned seating to load back-to-front and unload front-to-back to minimize contact.
- If there is a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 on a bus, that bus will be pulled from service and replaced with a spare bus. The bus will not be returned to service until it can be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected.

SCHOOL CLINIC

- Enhanced training will be provided to Clinic Staff.
- Clinic Staff must wear a mask and/or face shield and gloves when interacting clinically with all students and staff. Sanitizing Stations will be set-up outside the Clinic.
- The area where students interact with the health staff will be cleansed after each student visit.
- To prevent unwieldy numbers of students waiting to see the Health Aide/Nurse, all visits to the Clinic must be scheduled.
- Teachers will call the Clinic or Front Desk before sending a student to the Clinic to ensure availability and quick response. Exceptions to this rule: Any emergency may send a student to the Clinic or call the Health Aide/Nurse for services.
- Students who are scheduled for regular Clinic visits, such as those who must have their glucose checked at designated times, do not need to have someone call ahead.
- Plexiglass will be installed between cots.
- A Waiting Room will be established with required Social-Distancing.
- A room will be designated for students who are awaiting parent pick-up due to COVID-19 symptoms or other reason

Hallways, Restrooms, and Common Areas

- Hallway traffic will be one way, with arrows on the floor.
- Hand sanitizing stations will be available in hallways.
- Students will be discouraged from gathering in common areas.
- The number of students in restrooms will be limited.
- Restrooms will be disinfected throughout the day.

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL

Arrival for K – 5 students will not be much different than normal. Upon arrival students will go straight to class or to the cafeteria for breakfast.

Arrival times for secondary schools may need to be adjusted, since some secondary schools have students who choose to arrive on campus up to an hour before the beginning of school. This leads to a lot of opportunities for students to socialize in large groups. The goal is for there to be as little time as possible between students arriving on campus and the beginning of classes. This will prevent groups of students from gathering, interacting, and creating opportunities for the virus to spread. Principals will determine the appropriate arrival times for their campuses based on their ability to get students in class on time and their ability to provide adequate supervision for students before the start of classes.

At dismissal there will be increased supervision to maintain directional flow and reduce mass gatherings. Dismissal will be staggered when possible. If principals are able to utilize the staggering of students, they will communicate their plan to parents. Parents who are picking their students up from school should remain in their vehicles.

Secondary students will be required to wear masks at dismissal. (If the local rule requiring masks for everyone over six years old remains in effect, then mask will be required for these students, as well.)

RESPONDING TO A POSITIVE CASE OF COVID-19

Our ability to keep our schools up and running will hinge greatly on our vigilance in following the safety measures outlined in this plan. There is growing evidence that strict adherence to these practices greatly enhances an organizations ability to control the spread of the virus. However, if we do have a student or employee test positive for COVID-19 they will not return to school or work until cleared by a physician with a doctor’s note reflecting the day of return. Once an individual is confirmed positive for COVID-19, the Health Department will be notified and contact tracing will be conducted.

A Health Department letter will be sent home with all students having close contact with a confirmed case. In consultation with the Health Department, a decision will be made regarding which individuals should quarantine and for how many days.

Students who test positive or who are sent home to quarantine due to exposure will be provided a device and a plan for distance learning.

VISITORS, VOLUNTEERS, AND VENDORS

Visitors, volunteers, and vendors will be approved on a very limited basis until further notice. Approved volunteers, visitors, and vendors will be required to sign in via RAPTOR for entry. All vendors will be vetted via the front office.

To minimize outside influence into the school any person entering campus will be escorted to their destination. All will complete COVID-19 questionnaire, wear masks, and utilize hand sanitizer.

All parent visits for the purpose of having breakfast or lunch with their children will be suspended until further notice. K – 5 parents may escort their student(s) to the door of their classroom for the first two weeks of school if they wear a mask, complete COVID-19 questionnaire, and exit campus immediately upon releasing their student(s) to their teacher(s).

ATHLETICS, EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES, AND CLUBS

Our school sponsored athletic teams, clubs, and other extracurricular activities serve a vital role on our school campuses. Our ability to allow these activities during this time will require careful adherence to the safety protocols put in place to reduce the risk of COVID-19 spread.

Athletics

This summer we began allowing student athletes to return to campus under Phase 1 guidelines (see appendix A) in early June. This phase allowed for small groups of student athletes to come in for conditioning, weight training, and individual skill development that did not involve physical contact. In mid to late June, sports teams could move to Phase 2, which allowed for greater numbers, but kept other guidelines in place. As of today (July 8, 2020) we remain in Phase 2.

The official beginning of the FHSAA fall sports season is July 27, 2020. Our goal is to be positioned to move into Phase 3 by that date. All student athletes who choose to move into Phase 3 and who wish to participate in fall sports will be required to have a “**Assumption of Risk, Waiver, Release & Hold Harmless**” form signed by their parent/guardian.

Currently there are no plans to alter fall sports schedules. However, decisions regarding spectators and other related matters have yet to be made.

BAND AND FINE ARTS

Each student will bring his or her own water bottle to band camp or individual water bottles will be provided for each member by band boosters. Students will be expected to socially distance in the classroom and on the field. The band room will be arranged for social distancing and band students will adhere to the guidelines for social distancing as much as possible. Rehearsals will be outdoors when appropriate.

During the first quarter, out of county band travel will be limited for football games and other events. In some cases, a pep band may be at the game. This decision will be reevaluated each quarter.

We will still allow bands to perform their annual concerts and performances as performance opportunities are key to a student’s band experience. For the first quarter, outdoor performances and live stream performances can occur. This decision will be reevaluated each quarter.

Volunteers and band boosters are not permitted on campus during the school day. After school, parents can be part of the band booster program if they have completed the NCSD volunteer paperwork, COVID Activity and Athletic Paperwork and participated in a band COVID19 parent orientation. Band booster parents will be encouraged to wear masks, practice social distancing, and volunteer with the same small group every time to limit exposure.

Band uniforms have been cleaned and sanitized following the manufacturers’ guidelines.

CLUBS

Clubs will be allowed to meet periodically. School-based sponsors will ensure that students adhere to social distancing when possible, will wear face masks and efforts will be made to follow CDC guidelines. All students must have a signed COVID Activity and Athletic Waiver on file to participate in club functions.

MEDICALLY VULNERABLE STUDENTS

All medically vulnerable students and those students who live with medically vulnerable family members should consult with their family doctor and develop a plan for their safe participation in schooling. For medically vulnerable students who come to school, school health staff will develop school health plans in consultation with the county health department. Our schools will consider accommodations for these students on a case-by-case basis.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

If a parent of a student(s) with a disability believes the established procedures are not appropriate for their student(s) they should contact their healthcare provider to discuss their child's health risk in school. After the parent consults with their health care provider they should contact the school to arrange a meeting to address their child's specific needs utilizing the district's COVID-19 Impact Services and Supports Plan. This plan will outline extra precautions necessary for the student's safe return to schooling.

PART 3 INSTRUCTIONAL CONTINUITY PLAN

The Instructional Continuity Plan (ICP) addresses what the district will do if we go back under an executive order requiring everyone, except for essential service workers, to stay at home. When this occurred this past spring, the district had very little time to prepare. If the situation reoccurs, we will be in a much better position to implement distance learning. Teachers will be going through training, prior to the beginning of school, on our new Learning Management System (LMS) called Canvas. The LMS will assist teachers and students by providing a more fluid and seamless transition to learning through a virtual platform.

The overall ICP will be completed within the next couple of weeks and will be shared at that time.

PART 4 LEARNING OPTIONS FOR 2020 - 2021

Elementary (Grades PreK-5)

Elementary Option 1– Traditional School (Brick and Mortar) K-5 students will go to school as normal, five days a week. PreK students will go to school as normal, four days a week. Early release days will continue to occur every Wednesday.

*If your child is a student with disability being served through our Access Points, STARRS, or our medically fragile program, it is the recommendation of the Nassau County School District that you continue to send your student to their zoned/assigned school and to select Option 1 for your student.

Elementary Option 2– School-Based Distance Learning Students will remain attached to the current school while receiving instruction online. Teaching will mirror the pace and rigor of the traditional brick and mortar school. Students choosing this option should make a semester commitment.

*Students with an IEP or 504 Plan will have access to many accommodations that naturally occur in the virtual setting. Please note that some accommodations may not be possible to implement in the online educational setting. All related services will be delivered through teleservices or at your child’s zoned/assigned school, and this decision will be made utilizing your student’s IEP team process.

Elementary Option 3– Nassau Virtual Students who choose Nassau Virtual will withdraw from their traditional school and switch their enrollment to Nassau Virtual. Students choosing this option should make a semester commitment.

*Nassau Virtual School is a “school of choice.” By enrolling in a school of choice, your child’s Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or 504 Plan may become inactive. Therefore, all ESE/504 students must have an IEP/504 review prior to enrollment. A member of the Nassau Virtual School staff must attend this review. This means that the exceptional education or related services which were provided to your child at his or her previous school of enrollment may not be available at Nassau Virtual School. Students with an IEP or 504 Plan will have access to many accommodations that naturally occur in the virtual setting. Please note that some accommodations may not be possible to implement in the online educational setting

Secondary (Grades 6-12)

Secondary Option 1– Traditional School (Brick and Mortar) Students will go to school as normal, five days a week. Early release days will continue to occur every Wednesday.

*If your child is a student with disability being served through our Access Points, STARRS, or our medically fragile program, it is the recommendation of the Nassau County School District that you continue to send your student to their zoned/assigned school and to select Option 1 for your student.

Secondary Option 2– School-Based Distance Learning Students remain attached to the current school while receiving instruction online. Teaching will mirror the pace and rigor of the traditional brick and mortar school. Students choosing this option should make a semester commitment. All courses will not be available through school-based distance learning. For courses not available through school-based distance learning, students may take the course through Nassau Virtual or FLVS.

*Students with an IEP or 504 Plan will have access to many accommodations that naturally occur in the virtual setting. Please note that some accommodations may not be possible to implement in the online educational setting. All related services will be delivered through teleservices or at your child’s zoned/assigned school, and this decision will be made utilizing your student’s IEP team process.

Secondary Option 3– Nassau Virtual

Students who choose Nassau Virtual will withdraw from their traditional school and switch their enrollment to Nassau Virtual. Students choosing this option should make a semester commitment.

*Nassau Virtual School is a “school of choice.” By enrolling in a school of choice, your child’s Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or 504 Plan may become inactive. Therefore, all ESE/504 students must have an IEP/504 review prior to enrollment. A member of the Nassau Virtual School staff must attend this review. This means that the exceptional education or related services which were provided to your child at his or her previous school of enrollment may not be available at Nassau Virtual School. Students with an IEP or 504 Plan will have access to many accommodations that naturally occur in the virtual setting. Please note that some accommodations may not be possible to implement in the online educational setting.

PART 5 MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL WELL BEING

It is the mission of the Nassau County School District (NCS D) to develop each student as an inspired life-long learner and problem-solver with the strength of character to serve as a productive member of society. In order to achieve this mission, it is crucial to develop the student as a whole including their mental and behavioral wellness. Mental and behavioral wellness have been a formal priority of the NCS D for over five years.

In January 2015, the NCS D implemented a district-wide System of Care (SOC). This SOC is built on the belief that Nassau County students are best served through the implementation of a relationship based, whole-child centered model.

The SOC was developed on the foundation of two evidenced-based models: The National Association of School Psychologists' Framework for Safe and Successful Schools (Cowan et al., 2013) and the Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child model put forth by The Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) and the Centers for Disease Control in 2014. These two models provide the structure for the SOC to provide services efficiently and effectively to all students and to promote close school-community collaboration.

The purpose of the System of Care is to create a system that is built as a "safety net" for all students and their families. This system exists so that all students in need are identified and receive effective and timely services.

The SOC is enhanced by experts from multiple disciplines. The Mental Health Assistance Allocation plan improves access to school-based mental/behavioral health supports and improves the staffing levels in terms of school-employed mental health professionals. The vision for these professionals is that they receive ongoing training and technical support to allow them to infuse prevention and intervention services into the learning process and to help integrate services provided through school–community partnerships into existing school initiatives.

The district has increased support so that each school will have access to a mental health provider 4-5 days per week. This allows for one mental health provider (school psychologist, mental health counselor, or school social worker) to serve on the Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) School-Based Problem-Solving Team. Through this role, mental health providers will collaborate with other team members to conduct suicide and threat assessments, crisis intervention, and individualized/small group student support. In addition, the school based mental health professional will provide comprehensive services to students at their school including individualized assessment, feedback, intervention, skill-based treatment, and relapse prevention through progress monitoring. Community-based and contract-based collaborative partners can also provide assistance with diagnosis, treatment, medication management, in-home support, and relapse prevention.

Access to mental/behavioral health support can be achieved via the System of Care, the school based MTSS process or both. As noted above, the SOC provides immediate access to the mental health provider on campus. This trained professional makes a determination as to if the student is in crisis, needs a referral to a community agency, or needs a referral to the school-based problem solving team. If the student is in crisis, the mental health professional has access to a community based Mobile Response Team (MRT). The MRT assesses the student and determines if immediate crisis intervention is needed. If the student is not in crisis but may need support beyond the school based mental health provider, the student is offered access to community partners and agencies. The MTSS is a third option for support. The school's problem solving team allows faculty and staff to address mental/behavioral health needs via a multi-tiered approach. This process allows for data driven decision making using a four-step problem solving model. MTSS is a framework to provide supports to students focusing on the whole child. Students flow through the tiers based on need and data. Indicators of positive outcomes include but are not limited to an improvement in academic engagement, positive behavioral changes, decrease in disciplinary referrals, improved coping skills, and improved relationships and rapport building. The following description of the tiered approach is noted below:

- Awareness/prevention universal core instruction/Tier I includes: Alignment with State and District Standards, Character Education, Youth Mental Health First Aid (YMHFA), Expect Respect Bullying Prevention, PREPaRE school crisis prevention and intervention curriculum, parent workshops, Sanford Harmony social emotional development

curriculum, mental health awareness education, Positive Behavior Interventions and Support Tier I practices and procedures.

- Supplemental instruction/Tier II includes but is not limited to: Evidence-based mental/behavioral health services for students at risk for one or more co-occurring mental/behavioral health or substance abuse diagnoses via small group social skills instruction, Check-In/Check-Out, Coping Cat, Skills Streaming, Check and Connect K-12, 101 Ways to Teach Children Social Skills, Ripple Effects (provided by community agency), strategic research based interventions targeted to student's specific needs with frequent progress monitoring, Positive Behavior Interventions and Support Tier II practices and procedures.
- Intensive interventions/Tier III includes but is not limited to: Evidence-based mental/behavioral health services for students with one or more co-occurring mental/behavioral health or substance use diagnoses utilizing the University of South Florida Department of Education's best practice recommendations, contract-based collaborative partners to provide wrap-around and direct services in the areas of individualized assessment, diagnosis, intervention, treatment (i.e. medication management), and relapse prevention, Modular Approach to Therapy for Children Anxiety, Depression, Trauma, or Conduct Problems (MATCH), Trauma Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT), and Positive Behavior Interventions and Support Tier III processes and procedures, school Problem Solving and Response to Intervention (PS/RtI), individual social skills instruction, Functional Behavior Assessment, Positive Behavior Intervention Plan, Positive Behavior Interventions and Support Tier II practices and procedures.

Beyond the in-school referral process for our faculty and staff, our students will be able to access mental/behavioral health support via self-referral as well. They can go directly to their teacher, school counselor, or mental health provider on campus to access mental/behavioral health support. Students and families also have access to a plethora of resources on the Nassau County School District website at <https://www.nassau.k12.fl.us/Page/3277>. These resources are updated periodically and are often shared on our NCS D Facebook page. In addition, each student, parent, and community member (residents, public member of society) has access to FortifyFL. FortifyFL is a suspicious activity reporting tool that allows anyone to instantly relay information to the appropriate law enforcement and school officials. People can anonymously submit tips online which automatically routes to the appropriate law enforcement agency and school officials. This will not only prevent tragedies, but it can also elicit the appropriate help for the student.

The Nassau County School District is aware that these are extraordinary times causing anxiety and uncertainty. We understand the importance of taking care of the mental/behavioral health of our students, and we are committed to supporting their wellbeing. We are here to aid in decreasing the stress and anxiety that our students may experience at this time. Our vetted support system provides access for all students in Nassau County to find assistance during their time of need.