

Reopening Bay District Schools: Considerations for a Safe Return to School in Fall 2020



**Publication Date: July 16, 2020
Superintendent William V. Husfelt III**



WILLIAM V. HUSFELT III
SUPERINTENDENT

1311 Balboa Avenue
Panama City, Florida
32401-2080

(850) 767-4100
Hearing Impaired Access
(800) 955-8770 Voice
(800) 955-8771 TDD

www.bay.k12.fl.us

Board Members:

Jerry Register
District 1

Ginger Littleton
District 2

Pamm Chapman
District 3

Ryan Neves
District 4

Steve Moss
District 5

July 9, 2020

Dear Parents, Guardians, BDS Employees, School Board Members and Community Members:

Thank you for your support and for the myriad of ways in which you have helped our children since the pandemic prompted the closure of our schools in March. So many people in our community have become heroes for our children and I am grateful to each and every one of you.

Despite all of our hard work, our prayers, our research and our determination, we find ourselves still in uncharted waters with no clear path and more questions than we have answers. This pandemic is another scary situation we must all face together.

But, as we all already know, schools are the foundation of a community and schools are critical support systems for many of our students who have come to rely upon us for everything from food to clothing to counseling in addition to the academics we have always provided. With that in mind, we put together a task force of community members and experts in May so they could begin guiding our reopening plans. Those task force members (who included students, parents, medical experts, teachers, support employees, administrators and community members) worked alongside our district staff to prepare our guidance and recommendations for the reopening of school when deemed appropriate by state leaders.

On Monday, July 6, 2020, the Florida Commissioner of Education signed the Florida Department of Education Emergency Order No. 2020-E0-06 which directs schools to reopen in August for full-time instruction and attendance. On July 7th, our district team presented our ideas and research-based best practices to the School Board for their discussion. Those materials can be found online on our reopening website link at <http://www.bay.k12.fl.us/school-reopening>

While no one has all of the answers right now, and the questions seem to change by the hour, difficult decisions lay ahead for all of us. I want you to know that the safety of our students and staff remains our priority. We have worked diligently with both of our trusted healthcare partners in the development of our suggested

protocols and procedures and we've aligned ourselves closely with the latest research, suggestions, guidance and policies.

There is no "one size fits all" answer in a situation like this, but we hope that you can find an appropriate option for your child and your specific situation. The options available for enrollment and the detailed descriptions of our plans, practices and procedures will enable you to find some comfort moving forward.

I expect that, to some degree, our plan will become fluid as we adapt to the latest guidance and protocols put forward by the state and federal experts. Nothing is more important to us than the safety of our staff and students and so we will continue to research, to ask questions and to determine the best courses of action moving forward.

Thank you for your continued trust and support in these challenging times. We have been through a lot together in Bay County since Hurricane Michael and I am confident that we can find our way through this pandemic together as well. Please know that we are determined to offer you options, support, transparent communication and our continued commitment to excellence for all students.

I believe that Bay County stands together for our children and that we are all prepared to support each other to do what's right and best for our students and our families.

We value your input and feedback as educational partners and we never take for granted the trust you place in us. Please know that we are just a phone call, or an email, away when you have questions and we will endeavor to be as responsive as we can in the days and weeks ahead.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "W. Husfelt", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

William Husfelt
Superintendent

Table of Contents

Overview.....	5
Academic Options.....	6
General Communication.....	7
Face Masks and Cloth Face Coverings.....	8-9
Mitigation Strategies.....	10-11
Campus Visitors.....	12
Employees	13
General Cleaning and Disinfecting.....	14-15
Protocols for Cases of COVID-19.....	16-19
Attendance	20
Academics.....	21-22
Student Wellness.....	23



Overview

On Monday, July 6, 2020, the Florida Commissioner of Education signed the Florida Department of Education Emergency Order No. 2020-E0-06. Pursuant to this Order, Bay District Schools (BDS), in partnership with a stakeholder task force and the Department of Health-Bay County, has developed this guidance to support the full reopening of school facilities and to ensure continuity of instruction during the COVID-19 pandemic. Equitable access to education that meets the needs of our students, staff, parents, and community is a critical component of Bay County's continued recovery and reopening.

The district has an enhanced focus on the health and safety of students and staff as a result of the unique situations faced due to COVID-19 pandemic. Schools will continue to evaluate systems, policies, and protocols as communities and schools are impacted. These are unprecedented times, and unprecedented measures are being taken to provide a full array of services in safe environments. The district will continue to work with state and local health department officials to assess and implement the necessary health and safety measures required to prevent disease spread.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) provides considerations for schools, in part that states, *"Schools can determine, in collaboration with state and local health officials to the extent possible, whether and how to implement these considerations while adjusting to meet the unique needs and circumstances of the local community. Implementation should be guided by what is feasible, practical, acceptable, and tailored to the needs of each community."*

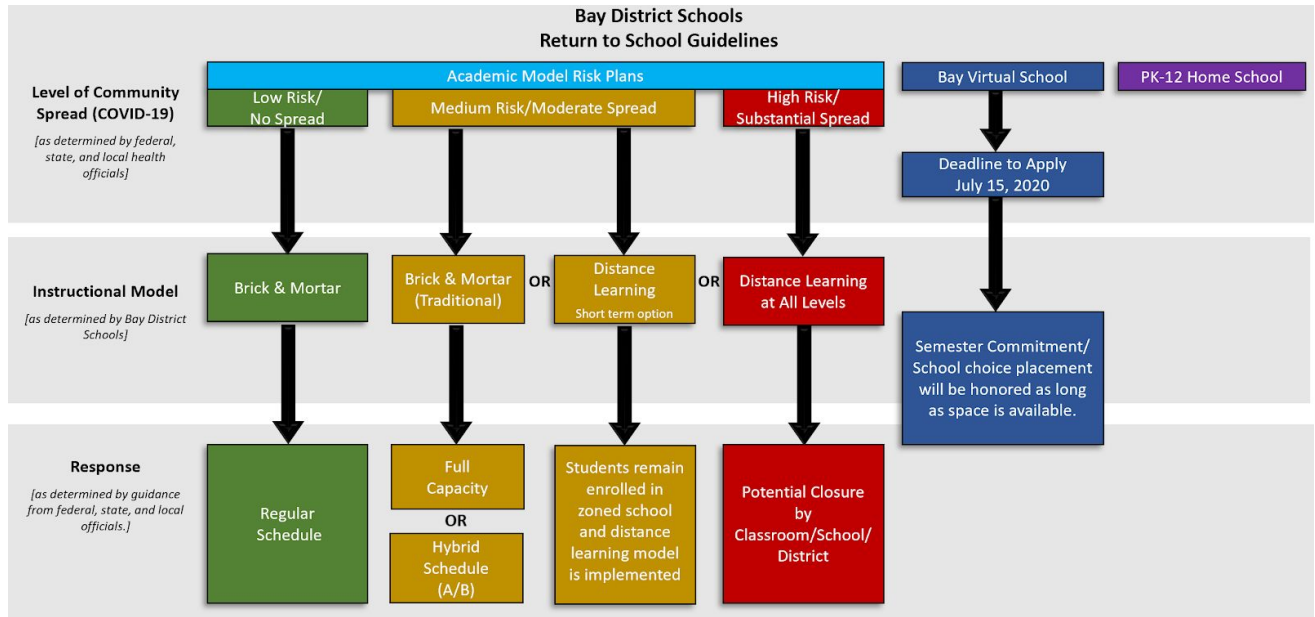
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/schools.html>

BDS, in collaboration with a stakeholder task force and our school health program partners, has developed this guidance to support the full reopening of school facilities based on the most current information available. This resource is intended to inform decisions and to support actions, policies, procedures, and protocols that are made in the best interest of our students, families, staff and community.

This guidance is subject to change according to information provided by federal, state and local officials, access to resources and materials, and/or fluidity of the COVID-19 Pandemic. The School Board hereby leaves to the Superintendent's discretion the ability to adjust this document as may be required by local, state and federal guidance or requirements, or as dictated by present circumstances, without School Board approval.



Academic Options





General Communication

District

- Bay District Schools will continue to prioritize the safety and wellness of all students.
- Human Resources will send a daily email to employees reminding them about the importance of staying home when sick.
- The Office of Communications will send weekly and monthly alerts to families reminding them about COVID-19 symptoms and encouraging them to keep students home if they are sick.

District and Schools

- Continue to communicate and educate on topics including but not limited to signs and symptoms of COVID-19, avoiding contracting COVID-19, social distancing, healthy hygiene practices, handwashing, social distancing with staff, students and families.

Schools

- Continue to use ITV, morning announcements, and morning meeting time to deliver and instruct on these topics.
- Share district-approved resources and updates/revisions provided by the district office using:
 - Available school staff including Health Professionals, Parent Liaisons, Social Workers, Counselors.
 - Communication platforms to relay this information to students, parents and families.
- Display district-provided visual aides regarding handwashing, social distancing, etc.



Face Masks and Cloth Face Coverings

Bay District Schools will follow the current CDC guidelines which recommends the use of face masks/cloth face coverings for individuals **when social distancing is not possible**.

When social distancing is possible, Bay District Schools permits the removal of face masks/cloth face coverings.

Employees are asked to select and wear an appropriate face mask/cloth face covering that best meets their individual needs.

- In the event that an employee is in need of a face mask/cloth face covering that has been forgotten, lost, or damaged, the district will provide one.
- Employees with a medical exemption for wearing a face mask/cloth face covering, or for whom face mask/cloth face wearing is not recommended, should provide documentation to the school principal. Documentation can be in the form of a note/letter from a licensed medical professional or special services therapist/provider who treats the individual.

Students are required to wear an appropriate face mask/cloth face covering that best meets their individual needs as provided by their parent/guardian.

- Students who struggle with this requirement will be provided additional help and support.
- Flexibility will be shown for students in pre-kindergarten through second grade.
- In the event that a student is in need of a face mask/cloth face covering that has been forgotten, lost or damaged, the district will provide one.
- Parents/Guardians of students with a medical exemption for wearing a face mask/cloth face covering, or for whom a face mask/cloth face covering is not recommended, should provide documentation to the school principal. Documentation can be in the form of a note/letter from a licensed medical professional or special services therapist/provider who treats the child.

All visitors to our campuses (including parents and staff members) will be required to wear face masks/cloth face coverings upon arrival.

When social distancing is possible, Bay District Schools permits the removal of face masks/cloth face coverings.

Schools will implement mitigation strategies, such as but not limited to those listed below, based on unique space and needs of the school to maximize the amount of space between individuals.

- Removal of non-essential furniture.
- Rearrange areas, where possible, to facilitate social distancing.
- Encourage instructional staff to arrange work areas so that students are not facing each other.
- Re-organize, as much as possible, school arrival, dismissal, cafeteria, and transition procedures to maximum space between individuals.



Mitigation Strategies

Schools will implement the following strategies based on unique space and needs of the school.

School and/or District

- District create and schools post visuals to promote appropriate social distancing, handwashing, etc.
- Assist with the removal of non-essential furniture to maximize space.

Schools

- Do not schedule field trips.
- May allow clubs, extra-curricular activities, assemblies or other activities when proper social distancing can be maintained.
- Prohibit deliveries (flowers, balloons, lunches, etc.) unless previously authorized by administration.
- Reduce student movement around campus.
- Minimize and monitor hallway congestion (i.e. assess locker usage, establish hallway traffic patterns such as one way hallways, clear left or right side travel, etc.).
- Rearrange areas, where possible, to facilitate social distancing.
- Encourage instructional staff to arrange work areas so that students are not facing each other.
- Re-organize, as much as possible, school arrival and dismissal procedures to allow for maximum social distancing.
- Stagger recess times. Upon return to class, students will wash hands or disinfect with hand sanitizer if hand washing is not available. Recess is still required by state statute.
- Adjust cafeteria processes/procedures.
 - Consider alternate eating locations.
 - Consider utilizing outside spaces for eating as weather permits.
 - Assign tables/seats in the cafeteria.
 - Allow only approved faculty/staff and students.
 - No food deliveries unless there is an emergency situation or delivery

has been pre-approved by the school principal.

- Chartwells will pre-package student breakfast and lunch options for grab and go selections.
- Adjust arrival/dismissal procedures
 - Place district-provided hand sanitizer dispensers near entrances of facilities and parent sign-in/sign-out locations.
 - Use both entrance and egress to avoid clustering at single points of entry.
 - Implement and communicate to parents a “stay in car” policy for drop-off and pick-up car lanes.
 - Crowding at the arrival/dismissal gate is to be avoided.
 - Place cones, sidewalk marks or signage to assist with social distancing practices.
 - Stagger dismissal times and bus loading.
 - Reconsider student holding areas.



Campus Visitors

Visitors

- Schools are asked to limit visitors to essential staff only. Essential staff includes, but is not limited to, district staff, district-approved vendors/consultants, personnel providing outside services, members of the BDS Mentoring program, student teachers/observers.
- School and district hold parent/teacher conferences, IEP/504/MTSS meetings, Child Study Team, district meetings, etc. virtually unless absolutely unavoidable (i.e. lack of access).
- On the first day of school, Raptor-cleared parents/guardians may escort students to class if a mask or face covering is worn.
- Principal discretion is allowed for special situations.

Mentors

- Mentors provide essential supplemental supports for students.
- School and district will continue to use the Mentor opt-out consent protocol for student mentors. (Opt-out is not available for Take Stock in Children mentors.)
- Mentors will wear a face mask or a cloth face covering when working with students.
- When placing a mentor, district staff will work with administrators and teachers. Teachers approve mentors who have requested to work in classrooms.



Employees

District

- District staff will provide training resources and materials specific to Covid-19 mitigation and protocols.
- Human Resources will send a daily email to all employees reminding them to do a symptom check and encouraging them to stay home if sick.

Employees

- Will receive training during pre-school in-service on recognizing symptoms and ways to avoid contracting COVID-19.
- Utilize social distancing practices.
- Cover a cough or sneeze with the elbow or a tissue.
- Minimize face-to-face meetings. Employees are encouraged to use the telephone, online conferencing, e-mail or instant messaging to conduct business as much as possible, even when participants are in the same building.
- If a face-to-face meeting is unavoidable, minimize the meeting time, choose a large meeting room and social distance from each other if possible; avoid person-to-person contact such as shaking hands.
- Avoid any unnecessary travel and cancel or postpone nonessential meetings, gatherings, workshops and training sessions unless it can be accomplished virtually.
- Avoid congregating in work rooms, copier rooms or other areas where people socialize.



General Cleaning and Disinfecting

District

- Operations will provide appropriate disinfecting and cleaning training to employees.
- Operations will provide EPA-registered disposable wipes to employees so that commonly used surfaces (i.e., keyboards, desks, remote controls) can be wiped down before use.

District and Schools

- Schools and Department of Operations will monitor and ensure adequate supplies (i.e., soap, paper towels, hand sanitizer, tissue) to support healthy hygiene practices.

Schools

- School leaders will place district-provided hand sanitizer dispensers in front offices, hallways, and other heavy traffic areas.
- Teachers are asked to assist in the cleaning of frequently touched surfaces in their classrooms or work areas.

Transportation

- Be trained on how to clean and disinfect.
- Sanitize and disinfect after each route.
- Create seating charts to ensure consistent groupings minimizing the number of students in close contact.
- Open windows, when feasible, to ventilate the air.
- Provide hand sanitizer.
- Give special considerations for students who require special transportation and who have special health care needs.

Custodial Staff

- Receive training by district or designee on proper cleaning and disinfecting protocols.
- Follow the manufacturer's instructions for all cleaning and disinfection products (i.e., concentration, application method and contact time, etc.).
- Use all cleaning products according to the directions on the label.
- Use only EPA-approved products for disinfection use against COVID-19 will be used.
- Routinely clean and disinfect "High Touch" surfaces and objects. This may include cleaning objects/surfaces not ordinarily cleaned daily (i.e., door knobs, light switches, classroom sink handles, countertops, water fountains).

Employees

- Disinfect "High Touch" or shared items using appropriate cleaning materials.
- If determined to be age appropriate, students may help disinfect their own personal or shared items/materials (i.e. own books, desks, chairs, shared materials they have used, etc.).
 - Students must be under the supervision of a teacher or adult to ensure safety.
 - Students may NOT disinfect the bathroom, other desks, etc.
 - Disinfecting materials cannot contain bleach.
- Consider establishing processes/procedures for students for entering/exiting the classroom, classroom libraries, shared materials (pens, pencils, textbooks, etc.). Examples include:
 - Students use hand sanitizer upon entering the classroom.
 - Students clean his/her own personal work area and any borrowed materials before the end of class.
 - Quarantine classroom library books that students may have taken home for at least 7 days before it can be checked out again.
 - Establish locations and processes for disinfecting writing utensils students may need to borrow.
 - Assign individual materials (books, manipulatives, etc.).



Protocols for Cases of COVID-19

Planning for Individuals with Symptoms of COVID-19

District

- BDS Student Services will hire a School Health Liaison position to ensure a single point of contact and consistent daily communication with all key stakeholders.
- Questions regarding COVID-19 related issues or concerns are to be directed to the School Health Liaison.

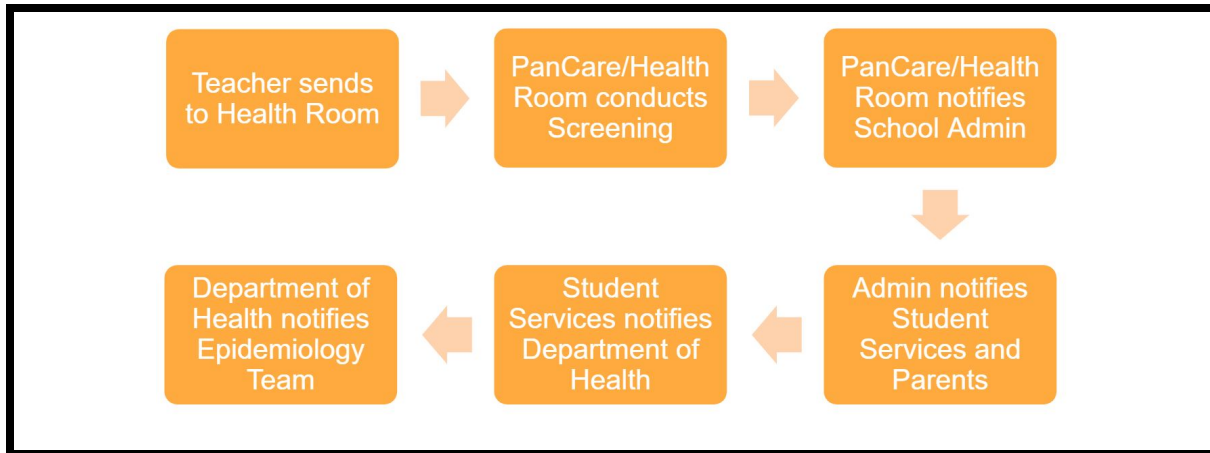
School Health Program Partners

- PanCare will set up health tech outside of the health room to screen/temp check any students who may be symptomatic.

BDS Schools

- School-based staff will keep Health Rooms open for students with daily medication needs or any other medical needs as dictated by their Individual Health Care Plan.
- Each BDS school in partnership with the Department of Health will train at least 3 BDS staff in Level I Med Assistance to cover the health room in the event that PanCare staff respond to symptomatic individuals.
- Each school campus will have an "isolation space," designated by school administration, for students who become symptomatic during the school day.
- School-based custodial staff will clean/disinfect the isolation space after each isolation event.

Responding to Symptomatic Students in Schools



Health Room Screening	
Health Tech for COVID-19 Screening	Health Tech for Health Room
Screens students who present with COVID-19 symptoms.	Maintains Health Room
If a student is determined to have possible COVID-19 symptoms, notifies appropriate school staff and ensures the student is wearing a face mask/cloth face covering.	
Escorts student with possible COVID-19 symptoms to the isolation space and supervises the student in the isolation space.	The Health Room HT moves to the screening table and covers the screening table while the COVID-19 Screening HT is in the isolation room. BDS staff covers the Health Room until the COVID-19 Screening HT can return.
Once the student is picked up, the COVID-19 Screening HT returns to the screening table.	Once the COVID-19 Screening HT returns to the screening table the Health Room HT returns to the Health Room.

Employees and Students

- Employees and students who report to school with symptoms will be sent home in accordance with health guidelines.
- When notified that someone has tested positive for COVID-19, the District School Health Liaison will contact the Department of Health (DOH). DOH will determine if any quarantines or closures are necessary.
- Refer to the Florida Department of Health COVID-19 Exclusion Guidance below.
- FERPA and HIPAA regulations will be followed.
- A return to school/work note from a primary care provider or the Department of Health-Bay County will be required for re-entry of symptomatic individuals and/or positive COVID-19 cases.

Attachment II



Florida Department of Health COVID-19 EXCLUSION GUIDANCE Decision Tree for Symptomatic People in Schools & Child Care Programs

To protect the safety and health of students and staff, school officials will send home, or deny entry, any student, visitor or staff member with **any** symptoms of illness. For symptoms consistent with COVID-19, please reference the exclusion criteria below to determine when individuals may return to the school. **Symptoms of COVID-19 may include but are not limited to:** fever (100.4°F or higher), cough, shortness of breath, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion, runny nose, nausea, vomiting and diarrhea. [\(Always check CDC's website for the most updated list of symptoms.\)](#)

Individual has been clinically evaluated

Received laboratory test for COVID-19

If POSITIVE: The local county health department will provide instructions to the person and household contacts about when it is safe to return to work/school.

If NEGATIVE: Stay home until fever has resolved, other symptoms have improved, AND either two negative tests are received in a row at least 24 hours apart OR 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared.

Individual has been clinically evaluated

COVID-19 diagnosis without lab test

If at all possible, contact your local county health department or medical provider to get tested. Stay home until you have had no fever for at least 3 days AND improvement of other symptoms AND at least 10 days have passed since your symptoms first appeared.

Siblings and household members also stay home for 14 days.

Individual has been clinically evaluated

Alternate diagnosis or laboratory confirmed condition (e.g., norovirus, hand/foot/mouth)

Follow provider directions, treatment, and return guidance.

Individual has not been clinically evaluated

If experiencing symptoms of COVID-19

Contact your local county health department or your medical provider to get tested. Stay home until you have had no fever for at least 3 days AND improvement of other symptoms AND at least 10 days have passed since your symptoms first appeared.

Siblings and household members also stay home for 14 days.

Cleaning and Disinfecting After a Confirmed Case of COVID-19

Custodial Staff

- Close off areas used by the individuals with COVID-19 and wait as long as practical before beginning cleaning and disinfecting to minimize potential for exposure to respiratory droplets. If possible, wait up to 24 hours before beginning cleaning and disinfecting.
- Clean and disinfect all areas (i.e., offices, bathrooms, and common areas) used by the ill persons, focusing especially on frequently touched surfaces.
- Clean dirty surfaces using soap and water prior to disinfection.
- EPA-approved products should be used for disinfecting.

Temporary Closure After a Confirmed Case of COVID-19

Florida Department of Health - Bay County (DOH-BC), Bay District Schools

If a temporary closure is deemed necessary by the Florida Department of Health - Bay County (DOH-BC), Bay District Schools will:

- Collaborate with DOH-BC.
- Communicate to parents, guardians, families via parent letters, LINK alerts, social media, classroom app notifications, etc.
- Work with the Department of Operations to clean/disinfect site and equipment.
- Collaborate with affected schools to determine any necessary cancellations of athletics/extracurricular activities/after school programs or events.
- Notify FLDOE of confirmed cases and school closures.
- Begin distance learning via the Canvas platform.



ATTENDANCE

Attendance

- Schools will continue to follow current school board policy regarding attendance (School Board Policy 7.105).
- Schools will waive all Perfect Attendance Awards for the 2020-2021 school year.



ACADEMICS

Return to School

BDS will be ready on the first day back with effective strategies to put every student on a fast track by accelerating their exposure to grade-appropriate work. Our current work and academic model encompasses the following tenets:

District

- Collaborate with school leaders to plan an approach to diagnosing students' unfinished learning in that prerequisite content knowledge and those prerequisite skills.
- Train teachers and leaders to diagnose students' unfinished learning and provide acceleration support.
- Collaborate with administrators and teacher PLCs to prioritize the most critical prerequisite skills and knowledge for each subject area and grade level.
- Adapt the scope and sequence/pacing guidance for each subject area and grade level to reflect where teachers might need to provide acceleration support.
- Adjust supports for teachers and leaders based on student progress monitoring results.
- Ensure teachers, students, parents, and community members have access to appropriate tools and resources to guarantee continuity in a face to face, hybrid, or distance learning scenarios.
- Provide teachers with resources to effectively utilize Canvas.

District and Instructional Staff

- Proactively plan and prepare for distance and in-person learning utilizing resources in Canvas.

School Leaders, Teachers and PLCs:

- Use Canvas from the start of school (day one) to ensure instructional continuity in the event of student absences or a shift to distance learning.
 - Students should be able to access instructional resources and learning activities used in the classroom including, but not limited to, student text, graphic organizers, materials, videos, and links.
- Canvas courses may be used as lesson plan documentation.
- Canvas courses should be shared with administrators.
- Collaborate to establish how teachers may document interventions and accommodations for students with MTSS/IEP/504 plans.
- Identify student academic needs through diagnostic and formative assessments.
- Address opportunity gaps/unfinished learning through a focus on access and equity for all students.
- Create realistic and manageable learning goals.
- Focus on proven instructional strategies and adjust instruction as needed.

Blended and/or Distance Learning

District

- Collaborate with administrators and teacher PLCs to determine most effective strategies for blended and/or distance learning.
- Collaborate with administrators and teacher PLCs to implement and monitor a process for continuous reflection and improvement.

Schools

- Pre-identify students for A/B grouping, to be utilized in the event smaller class sizes are needed in a hybrid model for blended learning.
 - The district will only transition to a hybrid model if mandated by state or local health officials.
 - Schools will communicate a hybrid model schedule to all stakeholders.
- Deliver innovative learning opportunities to students by the teacher of record.

District and Instructional Staff

- Proactively plan and prepare for distance and in-person learning utilizing resources in Canvas, the single learning management system.

Instructional Staff

- Continue to utilize Canvas in the event of blended and/or distance learning.
- Provide digital resources to streamline transition from face to face instruction to blended and/or distance learning.



Student Wellness

Schools

- Implement a district-selected Socio-Emotional Learning (SEL) Universal Screener for K-12.
 - Electronic for grades 4-12; Modified for K-3
 - Identify those students who may be internalizing versus externalizing
 - Provide support, counseling, or therapy, as appropriate, to these students
- Utilize TRIAD team members to provide academic and behavior support to students (i.e. 1:1 therapeutic interventions, small groups), coach teachers/staff in the implementation of SEL and de-escalation techniques, etc.

Employees

- Complete a free 25-minute Trauma-Informed Practices module during pre-school inservice.
- Implement district-created SEL lessons and activities and associated pacing guide.
- Implement the SAMSA/Pancare grant by Bay Base and members of the Student Wellness Team to provide additional after-school socio-emotional support to students.
- Use of Telehealth Kiosks by members of the Student Wellness Teams to provide “virtual” sessions in the event of school closures.