STARTING VIRTUAL. STAYING SAFE.
Frequently Asked Questions: Virtual Learning
Monday, July 27, 2020

Today (7/27), the District announced that the 2020-21 school year will begin fully virtual and continue until further notice. Below is a set of common questions regarding our plans for virtual learning. CLICK HERE to view the previously released FAQs (7/17), which include a comprehensive set of questions about both in-school and virtual learning. Please note, some information may no longer be relevant or accurate based on today's announcement. An updated complete set of FAQs will be provided later this week.

1. **How long will the District operate fully virtual? What factors will be considered to reopen schools?**
   Students will learn at home virtually until further notice, but we remain determined to return stronger to in-person learning this school year. We will continue to rely on local science and guidance from the SCHD in our decision-making to keep educators and students safe.

2. **Does my learning option commitment still apply when in-person learning resumes?**
   Yes. We will honor our commitment to provide families with learning options when in-person learning resumes. Parent selections made during the commitment window (July 6-24) and new student registration will apply when schools reopen.

3. **Is the decision to start the year virtually due to a lack of planning for reopening schools?**
   No. It was always the District's intent to reopen schools on day 1 with enhanced safety protocols and supports, as outlined in the S.A.F.E. Re-Entry Plan. It has always been communicated that our plan could be adjusted based on the latest health data available. This timeline of action and support documents key planning steps, decisions and awareness efforts made since March with the goal of reopening schools in mind, including: creation of Re-Entry Task Force, community surveys, listening sessions, re-entry protocols (cleaning, signage, etc.), summer PD for teachers, training for parents, etc.

4. **How will attendance be taken during virtual learning?**
Attendance policies and expectations will remain the same for the 2020-21 school year. However, for virtual classes, the method for taking attendance will be done by teachers via Microsoft Teams, and parents of students who participate in online learning will need to email the homeroom teacher the reason for any absences within two (2) days. Also, any reason for checking in late to or leaving early from online learning will need to be sent by the parent via email to the homeroom teacher. *Please note, advanced courses have specific attendance criteria, as outlined in Policy 4004.

5. **When will students receive their digital devices for virtual learning?**
Our goal is to ensure every student has access to a digital device. The distribution of devices will begin the week of August 3 and continue throughout the month of September, with designated pickup dates and locations based on school and grade level. Families will be receiving communication throughout the month regarding the device distribution schedule. Find more answers about digital device access and support in these FAQs.

6. **How will the District provide access to meals while students are learning virtually at home?**
Shelby County Schools is committed to ensuring children are served healthy meals, even during this public health crisis. Meal preparation will still happen at every school site with enhanced procedures for health and safety. Multi-day meal packs will be available for pick-up to reduce the number of times families have to come to campus. Meals will be served from a modified menu of cold items and items that can be easily reheated or stored at home. Families will receive more details about meal pick-up plans from their child's school.

7. **Does the District have a plan to support exceptional children or students with disabilities or special needs (IEPs, 504, CLUE)?**
Virtual educational options will be developed by each student's respective IEP team. Students served in the CLUE environment will use the District-approved curriculum with enhanced and enriched, project-based supplemental curriculum guides and materials. Virtual learning will happen in the CLUE901 Google classrooms. Students will meet online with teachers and complete independent learning within the online space. All students with IEPs will be provided with services and accommodations that are agreed upon by the IEP team. Resources are available for parents, teachers and students at www.edugoodies.com.

8. **Does the District have a plan to support English language learners?**
   English learners will continue to receive all necessary instructional support virtually.

9. **Will teachers be teaching virtually at home or at school buildings?**
   All teachers will have an option to teach remotely. If they agree to the remote virtual instruction criteria, principals may grant permission to teach from a remote setting. While school administration, substitute teachers and central office staff will be working in the schools/workspaces, teachers will be able to select the virtual option after meeting specific criteria in the District's Virtual Telework Agreement. If teachers fail to adhere to the agreement, they may be asked to teach from the school site.

10. **Will there be specific expectations and criteria for teachers and students?**
    Yes. The District is finalizing virtual expectations and criteria for all employees and students that will be released within the next week.

11. **Will the District share information about childcare resources for employees and parents?**
    Yes. The District is identifying local providers, like the YMCA, who offer reduced or no-cost childcare options for essential working families. [Please find more information about identified childcare resources here.](#) *Please note, the availability of some providers may be subject to change.

12. **What will a typical virtual learning day be like for students?**
    Students learning at home will participate in virtual classes throughout the regularly scheduled school day. Independent work and physical activity will be built into the daily schedule. [View sample schedules for a typical virtual learning day here.](#)

13. **Will children be expected to sit for seven (7) consecutive hours on a computer to learn? How will their breaks be structured, particularly for younger students?**
    The typical school day (6.5 hours) will align with the required allotment of time for each content area, elective and intervention period. Students will have the opportunity to participate in independent learning, along with guided instruction from the classroom teacher through the use of Microsoft TEAMS. [View sample schedules for a typical virtual learning day here.](#)

14. **How will virtual students receive classroom materials/books/projects etc.?**
    Classroom materials will need to be scanned and uploaded into the virtual classroom for the student to access. In some cases, parents may need to make arrangements to pick up special texts or materials from the school for the student.

15. **What is the plan for hands-on courses, such as CCTE, labs and project-based learning?**
    Elective courses that require hands-on learning will receive the same attention as traditional courses. Educators will be asked to deliver instruction to their students virtually, assign tasks, provide feedback and score individual projects and assignments.

16. **Will all students still have access to arts instruction (visual, performing, etc.)?**
    Yes. The arts are an important part of the total learning experience, and creative and performing arts programs will still be offered virtually. Students will receive live instruction from teachers at their school and participate in teacher-led projects and activities. Families will receive more information from their schools about the availability of supplies, instruments, etc. that may be needed for virtual learning at home.

17. **Will there be special accommodations for Pre-K?**
    Pre-K students will engage in virtual learning that aligns with the scope of sequence for the Early Childhood Department. Supporting videos for parents will accompany instructional materials to ensure the academic, fine motor and social-emotional needs are being met. For students with disabilities, Individualized Education Programs (IEP) will be implemented, and accommodations will be made as appropriate.

18. **Will after-school/extracurricular activities be offered?**
    Involvement in after-school and extracurricular activities is an important part of a student's school experience. We are exploring potential virtual options for some extracurricular activities, staff permitting. Guidelines and availability of certain activities may vary by school and program type, so parents should expect to hear from their principals about the available after-school/extracurricular offerings at their school.

19. **Will athletics be offered?**

Middle and high schools that meet the District's readiness requirements are cleared to begin limited team conditioning Monday, July 20. Each school will determine the sports that will resume, and coaches will communicate directly with student athletes and families. All conditioning activities will prioritize the health and safety of our student athletes and coaches. Coaches and athletic staff have participated in required training based on CDC recommendations and guidelines from state and national health officials. Only outdoor workouts are allowed at this time, with a maximum of 50 total people in a single conditioning session. Student athletes will also stay in small groups - or "pods" - of 10 people max at all times. Additional protocols include daily health screenings, social distancing guidelines and required masks for player/coach interactions, among others.

20. **Will students be required to wear uniforms?**

Aside from the addition of wearing a face mask daily (when in-person instruction resumes), dress codes have not changed for the 2020-21 school year. All students are required to follow the established school-based dress code for in-person and virtual learning. Parents may contact their school directly for questions about dress code requirements for virtual learning.