



Return to Learn 2020 Executive Summary

The Franklin Special School District's planned return for the 2020-2021 school year is termed Return to Learn 2020. District leaders have spent many weeks meeting, planning, editing pacing guides, listening to stakeholders, reviewing and evaluating local, state and federal health recommendations. We are confident that this draft plan will enable the students, families, faculty and staff to begin the 2020-2021 school year with confidence in our ability to continue to achieve our mission of Excellence in Teaching and Learning for All. Hand in hand with learning is the critical need to do everything we can to keep those under our supervision safe and healthy to the extent possible. We believe our Return to Learn 2020 draft plan accomplishes both.

The Return to Learn draft plan is comprehensive in its mission to ensure children and staff are safe in their learning environments for the 2020-2021 school year. While we are planning for the majority of students to return to our buildings, we understand there will be those who are unable to return and may decide to use our virtual learning option when school starts. We plan to accommodate both scenarios when we return to school August 7.

Because guidance from state and local authorities is changing rapidly, we do not plan to release the complete Return to Learn draft plan until mid-July, when the Board of Education will review it in full. However, here are some highlights from our work to date.

Teaching and Learning

- The district will follow guidance from the Tennessee Department of Education as to how **attendance** will be coded for students who are unable to return to school or whose parents may choose to not send them to school. Teachers will take attendance for each virtual class using a variety of metrics.
- All students will be 1:1 with a device (tablet or Chromebook depending on grade level).
- Instruction will be provided in accordance with the Tennessee Department of Education's COVID-19 Continuous Learning Plan (CLP) Policy 3.210. The FSSD's CLP will include both traditional and virtual instructional models and will be placed on the district website.
- The district will prepare handouts, website updates and a handbook addendum for parents and school personnel regarding guidelines, reopening procedures, and associated health and wellness protocols.
- School personnel will address the social emotional needs of students through existing Social Emotional Academic Learning (SEAL) strategies and practices as well as new approaches tailored to the pandemic.
- Teachers and paraprofessionals will participate in in-person and virtual professional learning with a focus on social emotional learning.

- Clubs and fine arts groups may continue or resume when safety and social distancing protocols can be implemented. If feasible, clubs and fine arts groups will meet virtually should school close for an extended period of time.
- Sports may continue or resume at the discretion of state guidelines and/or conference requirements.
- In the event of an extended closure the district will provide opportunities for training in the various digital platforms students will utilize for virtual learning.
- The district will continue to use its established learning platforms of Google Classroom and Zoom in both the traditional and virtual instructional models.
- For those learning virtually, teachers will teach new content, assess virtually, and assign grades; students will upload work to Google Classroom. Teachers will provide a combination of real-time lessons via Zoom and pre-recorded lessons accessible on demand, to be pushed out through Google Classroom.
- Teachers will provide parent support and answer questions and emails within 24 hours (Monday – Friday) for virtual learners.
- For virtual learners, students in first through eighth grades will have access to six and one half hours of instructional time. Kindergarten students will have access to four hours of instructional time. (This requirement does not mean hours of screen time per day.) (State Board of Education policy 3.210)

Health and Safety

- All FSSD bus drivers will be issued cloth face coverings and required to wear them for the duration of each run.
- All riders will be expected to use hand sanitizer each time they board the bus. Hand sanitizer dispensers will be available on each bus.
- All riders, as age or developmentally appropriate, will be required to wear a cloth face covering for the duration of their bus ride. This requirement may be modified for younger students. Students will be expected to provide their own cloth face covering.
- When feasible, students will be assigned to no more than 2 riders per seat.
- Students will be socially distanced in the cafeteria. Depending on the school, lunches will be consumed in different locations so social distancing can be maintained. Adjustments to offerings will be made for students with food allergies.
- The buildings will be cleaned and disinfected thoroughly prior to occupancy each day using CDC-approved disinfectants.
- All students will have their temperature taken and use hand sanitizer at screening stations prior to building entry.
- Anyone who fails to meet the screening criteria or has a temperature reading of 100 or greater, will not be allowed to enter the building or participate in any activities or meetings on campus.
- Only essential visitors are allowed entrance past the front office.
- Parents/guardians should plan in advance for a designee to pick up children if needed. Children who do not pass the screenings, must be picked up promptly.
- Schools will not hold mass gatherings, such as assemblies and pep rallies, unless appropriate social distancing can be maintained.
- Schools will not plan in-person field trips but are encouraged to plan virtual field trips, when feasible.
- A cloth face covering will be worn by all staff, students and essential visitors in accordance with district protocol. Certain allowances can be made for specific situations.

Face Covering Protocol

While we will require all students riding the bus to wear a cloth face covering, as age and developmentally appropriate, we are still determining what the in-building student requirements will be. We are thoughtfully researching best practices as determined by pediatric health care associations, the CDC, and considering parent responses to our survey. When the full draft plan is presented to the Board of Education in July, it will include our cloth face covering protocol for students in the buildings. Adults will be required to wear a cloth face covering.

School Closure Thresholds

The FSSD will use a system of illness thresholds as it makes modifications to the learning environment, in accordance with local public health officials. Please see the chart on our website to read how the levels of illness in Williamson County will determine how we modify our learning plan and at what point schools would transition to a full virtual model.

The comprehensive version of the Return to Learn 2020 draft plan is subject to modifications based on the ongoing guidance of state and local authorities. We will use this draft plan to fulfill the state's requirement for every district to create a Continuous Learning Plan. The CLP is intended to address how a district will continue to provide quality instruction to students in the event of COVID-19 related disruptions to traditional school operations during the 2020-2021 school year. The FSSD CLP will be posted online at the beginning of August. FSSD will consult with state and/or local public health officials prior to finalizing a decision to close a school or the district, when and how to reopen, as well as any modifications made to the FSSD Return to Learn plan.

With so much uncertainty in our lives, we hope that this Executive Summary of our Return to Learn 2020 draft plan provides you with a glimpse of how we envision opening school in August. We are excited and ready to return to school. It has been far too long since we have all been together! From now until school begins, we must do everything we can to stay healthy and protect ourselves and others so the illness level remains manageable and under our minimum threshold for opening. I strongly encourage you to wear a cloth face covering whenever possible and to remain vigilant about maintaining a physical distance buffer when you are in public settings. Thank you for doing your part and we will share more details about the start of the school year in a few weeks.

Sincerely,

David Snowden, Ph.D.
Director of Schools