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Why is everything starting so late? Why do parents have so little information?

- The State passed their budget late, it involved major cuts, so the district had to look very closely how to use the available funding to maximize learning.
- Until the BoE passed a budget, it wasn't clear when the different types of employees could come back (the school system has 12-month employees like principals, 11-month employees like some support staff, and 10-month employees like most teachers).
- Everyone has been working hard to make plans but not much could be finalized because some decisions also involve stakeholder input from teachers etc. and the district is not mandating uniformity across all procedures.

How does enrolment work for students who are new to DeKalb County School District (DCDS)?

- Enrolment is through the DCDS website <http://www.dekalbschoolsga.org/online-registration>
- Parents of Kindergarten students, former private/home school students, or coming from outside of DeKalb should complete this online enrolment process.
- Enrolment of children whose home or primary language is not English need to register through the International Welcome Center. Call (678)538-5246.
- Information is then sent to the local school, but there is sometimes a time lapse so check back after a few days.
- Students are allowed to start school with provisional enrollment if it takes time to scan proof of residency forms or affidavits.
- Procedures to provide a proof of residence for returning students are not final.

Note: Students who were in a DCDS school do not need to enroll in this system. Students who are shifting schools other than going from elementary to middle or middle to high school need to contact their home school to transfer records and register with the new school. HMS has a New Parent page with details that explain this for all schools <https://hmsptsamembershiptoolkit.com/newparents>

What about PreK enrolment?

- Enrolment into PreK is handled by the State (PreK other than special programs like Coralwood or some theme schools is funded through Bright from the Start, not DCDS) and no information about enrolment has been shared. PreK parents are encouraged to check the PreK enrolment portal

What will the schedule look like?

- There will be synchronous learning (this means live virtual interactions between the teacher and students) and asynchronous learning (assignments that students will complete on their own)
- There will be 4 weekdays that include regular synchronous learning, and Wednesday will be used for supplementary activities like student-teacher conference, small groups, special support etc. Individual schools may use different schedules than the templates on the county website.

Where is the calendar? What are partial days? Why are exams after winter break?

- The board approved calendar is available on the DCDS website [https://www.dekalbschoolsga.org/documents/calendar/board-approved-calendar\(2020-2021\).pdf](https://www.dekalbschoolsga.org/documents/calendar/board-approved-calendar(2020-2021).pdf)
- Early release days will mean synchronous (live interactive) teaching will end early so that teachers can do planning and training
- Because the start of school was delayed, the end of the semester had to be delayed to allow a balanced calendar with similar number of teaching days for each semester. This is particularly important for block teaching and high school where credits are accumulated by semester.

What learning platform will be used? Spring virtual learning was very confusing given the many platforms (Verge, Google Classroom, Class Dojo, etc.)

- Verge is the official platform for DCDS, but schools are permitted to select among some other platforms, including Google Classrooms and Microsoft Teams
- Principals are working to limit the number of platforms so that each student only encounters one.
- Principals are working with their teachers to determine which virtual platform(s) schools will use. There may be multiple platforms, for example, Seesaw for grades K-2, and Microsoft Teams for 3-5, or specialized platforms for music, but the goal is for students to use the same platform for core classes.

How will parents learn about how virtual school will work?

- Schools will be holding virtual open houses, where families can meet teachers and learn about the school year. Dates should be announced soon.
- The Family Engagement Office and IT departments will create webinars to teach parents how to use the virtual technology

How will tech support be handled?

- There is a new site for virtual learning support <https://www.dekalbschoolsga.org/virtual-learning-support> – this is for software/access issues
- There is the Digital Dreamer page <https://www.dekalbschoolsga.org/digital-dreamers/> – this is for hardware issues

What about after-school services and extra-curricular activities?

- Schools are planning to hold after-school virtual clubs and tutoring, and will use technology to make the experience as close to in-person "regular" after-school activities as possible.
- Middle school athletics has been postponed, high school is training, but games may be delayed. The decision will be made by the state-wide governing body. Some summer training had outbreaks and were shut down.

How will attendance work?

- Attendance will be taken each day and students will be expected to attend school. It is important to note that local school funding is determined based on the FTE (Full Time Enrollment) counts. The amount of state dollars coming to DCSD will depend on the number of students attending class. It is expected that the funding level for each school, including how many teachers can be supported, will be determined by attendance in October.

What are the plans for hands-on classes like art?

- Art will be taught similar to in-person. Parents may need to purchase supplies; some art teachers may have supplies to be distributed. Non-core classes will have their own teaching slots in the schedule.

What about work sheets and such for parents who don't have access to printers? What about books?

- Schools will make printed materials available for pickup. Parents may fetch packets at the same time as computers.
- Most materials will be online but some books may also be made available. Parents will be informed about pickup times.

Will teachers be allowed to teach from their classrooms?

- Due to health/safety concerns, it's likely that teachers will be able to retrieve supplies but not spend time in their classrooms.

How are teachers trained for virtual learning?

- Teachers have had opportunities for training over the summer. All teachers will attend a 3 day virtual training seminar starting August 5th, for which they will receive a stipend.
- The training seminar is used to make up for the furlough days that had to be implemented due to budget cuts. The funding for the training institutes will be coming from a different source than regular salaries. Teachers lose only 1 day of pay due to furlough.

How will special education plans (IEP) or accommodations (504) or extra learning support like reading intervention be handled?

- Planning is still in progress, more details are being developed.
- Wednesdays are available for breakout sessions and 1:1 supports. Paraprofessionals will support teachers with providing extra support.
- Counselors will provide extra support, possibly in small groups. They will probably be teaching more mental health/behavior presentations than before.

Will there be MAP testing?

- Yes, MAP can be administered from home and will be used to assess student learning status and progress.
- It's not yet clear what needs to happen to make sure a MAP test is valid for identifying Gifted students, those procedures are still being developed.

When and how will the decision to stay virtual be made? What kind of COVID-19 numbers will be used?

- DCDS will be advised by the Georgia Department of Public Health. The Board of Education will evaluate the transmission numbers in the middle of the month to determine whether schools can be opened for any form of in-person teaching the following month.
- It is expected that transmission levels will need to be near the levels they were when schools closed before they can open, but no firm decision has been made.