

VBCPS FALL 2020 PLAN



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Dear VBCPS family-

What follows this letter represents countless hours of research, deliberation and planning by division leadership and staff, a review of lessons learned during the extended closure last school year, and feedback from thousands of parents, staff, medical professionals and community members through focus groups, surveys and questionnaires. Our priority throughout this process, without question or reservation, is and will continue to be the health and safety of our students, staff and their families.

We all want school to be what we remember: students and teachers working side-by-side in classrooms. Educators and children need each other not only for learning, but also for social and emotional health and growth. Everyone prefers in-person instruction for each of those reasons and so much more. But COVID-19 is not going away anytime soon and we are tasked with providing meaningful learning experiences no matter how the virus is affecting our community.

I want to be clear that our decision to open or close our school buildings will be based on health data, not on personal preferences, emotions or politics. Specifically, our decision will be based on CDC guidance, on guidance from the VDOE and the Virginia Department of Health, and on regional health metrics provided by local medical professionals.

With that in mind, I will be recommending to the School Board that we begin the school year with virtual instruction and with a plan, driven by health data, to safely transition to face-to-face instruction, with virtual learning remaining an option for those families who prefer it.


To help you understand why and how I've arrived at this decision, we are sharing this document with our community. What this document does is provide background on the work that has gotten us to this point and lays out our plan for reopening schools based on a specific set of health metrics around COVID-19 in the Eastern Virginia area. Although we are beginning school virtually, we do describe when and how face-to face instruction will begin. We have outlined options for families and identified strategies and measures for health mitigation, curriculum, social/emotional learning, grading, technology, transportation, and equitable access to all those things when we are open either virtually or in-person. It's important to keep in mind that we may have to shift between face-to-face and virtual learning depending on local health data and potential state mandates. This document also shares our thinking around that. And finally, this plan also assumes that the governor has not reverted the state back to Phase 2, which would effectively close school buildings and require remote learning for all students regardless of local health data.

We know that times are uncertain. We know that every day that passes without knowing what school will look like only adds stressors to our community. But here are some certainties: Regardless of how the school year unfolds, we will teach our students. We will make sure they are fed. We will do everything in our power to meet their social and emotional needs. We will do whatever we can to support everyone in this VBSchools family. Our mission to educate and prepare future global citizens has not changed, even if the logistics for safely doing so may have to.

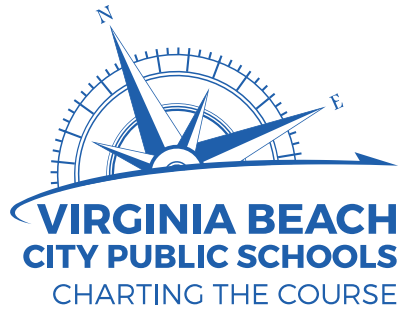
Please read through this document, and if you have additional questions, please visit [our FAQ website](#).

My thanks to our parents and guardians for their feedback, patience and support. I also send my gratitude to the entire VBCPS staff for their tireless dedication to our students and families.

Please be safe and take care of each other.



Aaron Spence, Ed.D.
Superintendent



Background

On March 13, 2020, Governor Ralph Northam ordered all K-12 schools in Virginia to close for a minimum of two weeks, due to the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19). With the closure, a COVID-19 Response Task Force was formed to address student nutrition and learning. During this time, VBCPS implemented a “Continuity of Learning Plan” where students were provided with materials and resources to reinforce learning that occurred prior to the closure. When it became clear that the closure would be extended beyond the initial two weeks, the response task force developed an “Emergency Learning Plan” (ELP) that began April 27, 2020 and was in place through the remainder of the academic year. Once the ELP was in place, the focus of the task force began to transition from response to recovery planning with the purpose of developing a plan for the return to school in the fall.

STATE GUIDANCE ON REOPENING SCHOOLS

The Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) created a back-to-school document, which outlined parameters for divisions as they worked to formulate their own return-to-school plans.

The VDOE's framework can be found on the state site, http://doe.virginia.gov/support/health_medical/covid-19/recover-redesign-restart-2020.pdf.

Scenarios Used for Planning

Based on the VDOE guidance, and given the uncertainties associated with the transmission and spread of COVID-19 and evolving guidance from state and local health agencies, three basic scenarios were used to guide the development of plans for reopening schools. The scenario-based planning was also deemed appropriate as circumstances could change over time requiring an alternate plan for the delivery of instruction throughout the 2020-2021 school year. The three scenarios that served the basis for the division's planning efforts were as follows:

- **Scenario 1** – Schools reopen as close to what we think of as normal, without significant physical distancing or other public health mitigation strategies.
- **Scenario 2** – Schools reopen with physical distancing and/or other public health mitigation strategies. This scenario would likely include a combination of virtual/remote learning with face-to-face instruction.
- **Scenario 3** – Schools would remain closed and students continue to engage in virtual learning.

PLANNING PRINCIPLES

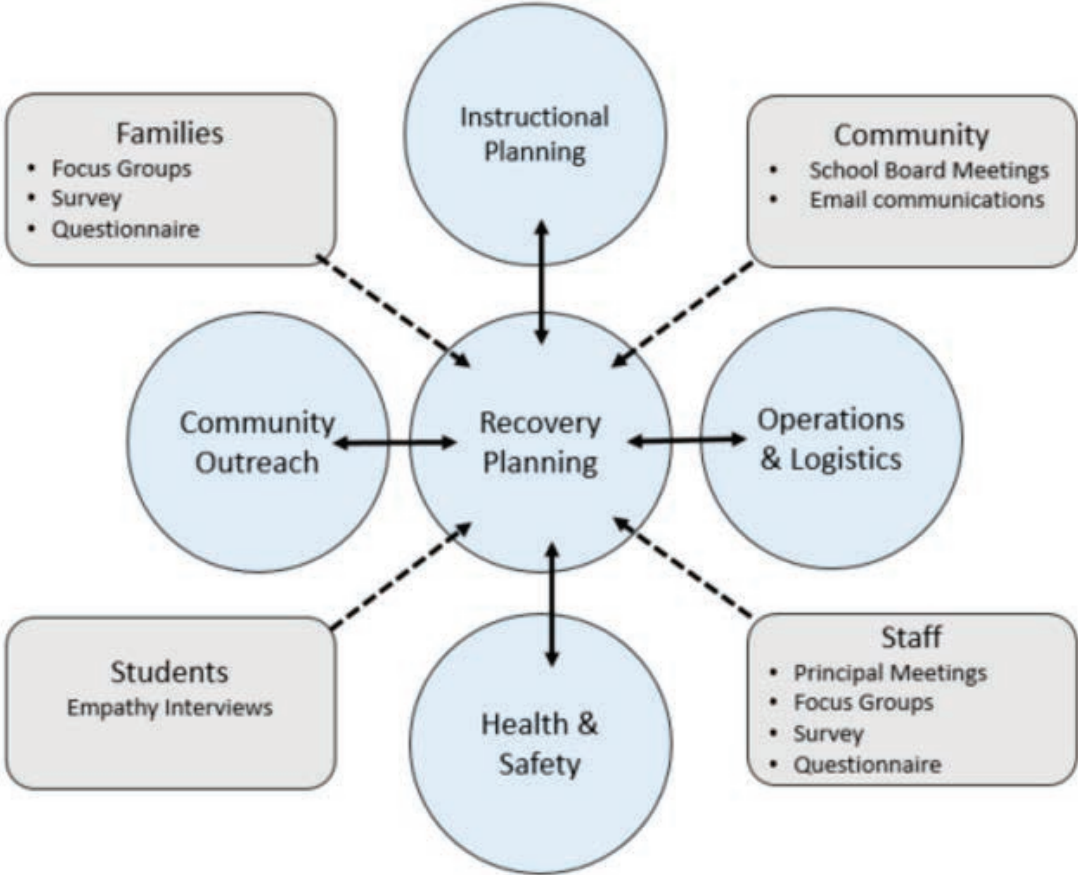
The work of the Recovery Planning Task Force and working groups was governed by the following principles:

- To engage in proactive, scenario-based planning that positions us well to pivot and be prepared for any potential changes to school operations.
- To consider the Governor's recommendations and guidance from national, state and local health officials to maximize in-person, safe learning experiences to the greatest extent possible.
- To address learning loss and ensure student wellness will be a priority through our focus on social-emotional learning and mental health.
- To develop practices, protocols, and guidelines that support a healthy and safe physical environment for students and staff.
- To work to mitigate to the greatest extent possible, the impact of the schedule on families and staff.
- To include the voices of our stakeholders throughout the planning process.

DIVISION REOPENING SCHOOLS TASK FORCE/METHODOLOGY

The fall recovery planning process involved daily meetings of The Recovery Planning Taskforce and various working groups focused on instructional planning, operations and logistics, health and safety as well as community outreach. Many task force members served in multiple work groups to ensure alignment and connectedness throughout the planning process. Central office administrators from the Department of School Leadership met regularly with building principals to gather input, solicit feedback and to keep them informed of the planning process. Figure 1 illustrates the work groups involved in the planning process as well as the involvement of stakeholders.

(Figure 1)

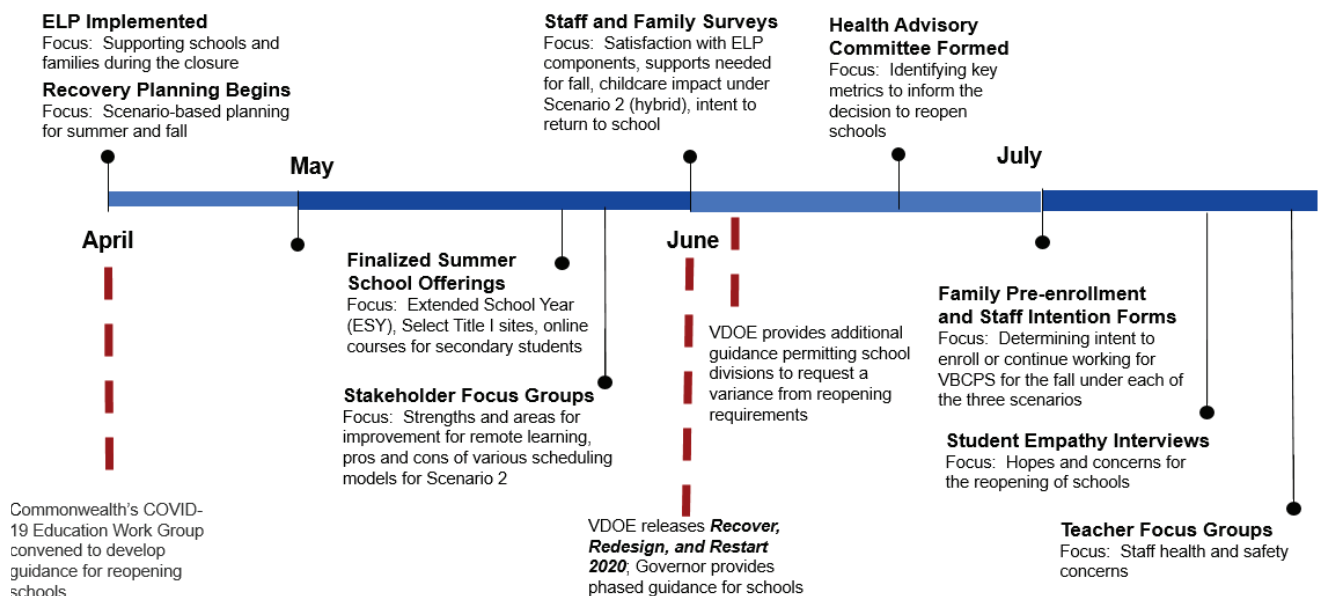


Taskforce Members and Advisory Groups

As noted above, a variety of stakeholders were engaged at critical points in the planning process through a variety of means such as focus groups, surveys, interviews and questionnaires. Input and feedback related to potential reopening plans came from families through focus groups, a survey and a questionnaire; community members through School Board meetings and email communications; students through empathy interviews; and, staff through principal meetings, focus groups, a survey and questionnaire. More detailed information about the involvement of stakeholders is described in the planning timeline (Figure 2).

(Figure 2)

Recovery Planning Context and Key Tasks



THE IMPORTANCE OF LOCAL DECISION MAKING

The VDOE signaled in its guidance that ultimately, any decision on how to reopen school would need to be a local decision, informed by advice from local health experts. This direction from VDOE is consistent with recommendations from the CDC as well as from the American Academy of Pediatrics, who suggest that local health data are an important component in deciding when and how to safely open schools. After reviewing local data and receiving feedback from stakeholders as mentioned above, VBCPS sought to convene a working group of local physicians to help inform our decision-making. A move towards school divisions collaborating with area health experts and using science and data metrics in decision making is increasing in the U.S.

LOCAL HEALTH CRITERIA AND GUIDELINES FOR REOPENING (PANEL OF AREA PHYSICIANS)

The division worked with a committee of area physicians with specialties in pediatric, primary adult, internal medicine, management of individuals with COVID-19 illness, public health, infectious diseases, and emergency medicine. The group then tasked a smaller group to review COVID-19 metrics and determine key measures for the safe opening of schools for students and staff. Prior to the meeting, the physicians communicated extensively with the Virginia Beach Department of Public Health (VBDPH) Medical Director regarding our community's status related to COVID-19 testing, cases, trends, and the use of key metrics in mitigation and response in the community. The workgroup also discussed recent community and staff feedback and was aware of expressed concerns. The workgroup's primary objective was to provide School Leadership with science-based, data-driven metrics for consideration in our decision-making, and with a secondary objective of evaluating our mitigation planning and providing feedback.

Community Transmission Levels: Green, Yellow, Red

The workgroup reviewed research studies, metrics considered in other states, and available VDH Health data metrics. To find COVID-19 information for the Eastern District of Virginia, navigate to the website for the Virginia Department of Health (<https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/coronavirus/key-measures/>). The various measures appear across tabs, or there is also a drop-down menu to select from. The default measure for the website is "Total Cases by Date Reported," which is displayed in a bar graph for the entire state. Just beneath that bar graph is another bar graph for total cases by region. The default region for the website is the "Northern" region. To navigate to the "Eastern" region, click the drop-down arrow between the two charts for "Select Region for Comparison from the Drop Down" and select the Eastern region. Please note that the VDH updates the information daily at @ 10:00 a.m. on the data from the preceding day.

The workgroup proposed using the following two COVID-19 indicators based on the Eastern Virginia region:

- Percent COVID-19 test positivity rate for 7-days, and
- Number of cases per 100,000 per week.

Using these indicators, the workgroup also proposed the following community transmission levels:

- Green: mild, less than 5% 7-day positivity rate, <10/100,000 cases per week (less than 26.5 cases per day)
- Yellow: mild-moderate, 5% to less than 10% , 10-100/100,000 cases per week (26.5 - 264 cases per day), and
- Red: substantial >10%., 100+/100,000 cases per week (265 or more cases per day),

The workgroup further recommended that VBCPS schools could open, with appropriate health mitigation strategies in place, if neither of the indicators are red, and that VBCPS should not initially begin face-to-face instruction if either indicator is in the red zone.

In addition to providing the above recommendations, the workgroup has and will review our current and planned mitigation plans and provide feedback. Many of their recommendations are outlined and included below.

Based on the information publicly reported by the VDH and under the recommendations of the local physicians workgroup, we will update our school division website daily and report the data for **Percent Positivity** and **Cases by Date** using three colors – **Green**, **Yellow**, and **Red** – as follows:

	Positivity	Cases
Green	<5%	<26
Yellow	5-10%	26-264
Red	10%>	265>

It's also important to note that, while we have received and reviewed guidance from the physicians workgroup and the VDH as well as reviewed guidelines from the CDC, the AAP, and the VDOE, ultimately, the final decisions rest with VBCPS, and there is some variance in our opening plan from these recommendations based on what we believe to be best educational practices and the need to blend sometimes conflicting advice with what we believe will prioritize both student and staff safety.

VBCPS FALL 2020 PLAN

Getting School Open

Given current health indicators in the Eastern Region, VBCPS will begin school for all students virtually. It's important to make this decision now, as this will allow staff and parents to begin planning for the first day of school and families to make a decision about which option for schooling they will select. Details on which options are available to our families follow.

For the 2020-21 school year, families will have two options for their children:

- Option 1 will be face-to-face instruction with appropriate mitigation strategies in place when health indicators tell us this is safe, with temporary virtual learning when health indicators do not allow for face to face instruction. Students participating in virtual instruction temporarily will remain enrolled in their assigned school and instruction will be provided by the teacher of record from the home school.
- Option 2 will be a fully virtual option, the Virginia Beach Virtual Learning Center. Families that select option 2 will have the opportunity for students to receive 100% of their instruction virtually for at least one full semester in the VLC. In the VLC, students will interact with their teachers synchronously (with live interaction) and asynchronously (independent, self-paced, without live interaction). Students will remain enrolled in their assigned school while being concurrently enrolled in the VLC. Students will participate in virtual courses from Schoology.

You may have noticed that these options do not include the hybrid model that had been previously shared. After much discussion with the taskforce and advisory groups, and in conjunction with the recommendation of health officials, it was determined that the hybrid model--scenario 2--would not provide either the educational or health benefits for which it had been designed. We now believe that students should either be in face-to-face instruction or an all virtual learning model.

As we monitor the health data, we will plan to begin face-to-face instruction for those who choose Option 1 once all indicators are green or yellow for 14 days. There are several important considerations for using a 14-day wait period. From a medical perspective, testing is not currently available on demand and can take several days to schedule an appointment. Also, given the recent spike in transmission of COVID-19 in Hampton Roads, there is currently a delay of up to ten days to receive test results. From an administrative or pragmatic point of view, the school division needs ample time to communicate with staff and families about the change in status as well as sufficient time to ready our school buildings and mobilize our bus fleet.

How we will transition to face-to face instruction will vary, depending on the health indicators described above. Specifically, schools will follow the Green, Yellow, Red model below:

- When the Eastern Region is in the **Green** zone for *both* percent positivity and cases by date, **in-person** instruction will begin for *all* students whose parents have selected option #1. Families who choose option 2 will have virtual instruction through the Virtual Learning Center for at least the first semester.
- When the Eastern Region is in the **Green** and **Yellow** zone for percent positivity and cases by date, **in-person** instruction will begin for *select* grade levels (pre-K-5, 6, and 9) as well as certain *designated groups* in all grade levels, e.g., Special education and/or English learner students. **Virtual** instruction will continue for all remaining students (in grades 7, 8, 10, 11, and 12) whose parents have selected option #1. VBCPS may begin to transition more students into face-to-face instruction if this data remains stable or improves. Families who choose option 2 will have virtual instruction through the Virtual Learning Center for at least the first semester.

- When the Eastern Region is in the **Yellow** zone for *both* percent positivity and cases by date, **in-person** instruction will begin for *select* grade levels (pre-K - 5, 6, and 9) as well as certain *designated groups* in all grade levels, e.g., special education and/or EL students. **Virtual** instruction will continue for all remaining students (in grades 7, 8, 10, 11, and 12) whose parents have selected option #1. VBCPS will **not** transition more students than those listed into face-to-face instruction as long as both indicators remain yellow. Families who choose option 2 will have virtual instruction through the Virtual Learning Center for at least the first semester.
- When the Eastern Region is in the **Red** zone for *either* or *both* percent positivity and cases by date, **virtual** instruction will continue for *all* students whose parents have selected option #1. This instruction will be delivered by their face-to-face teacher. Families who choose option 2 will have virtual instruction through the Virtual Learning Center for at least the first semester.

	PK-5, 6, 9	7-8, 10-12	Designated Students
Green Positivity/ Green Cases	In-person	In-person	In-person
Green Positivity / Yellow Cases	In-person	Virtual to In-person	In-person
Yellow Positivity / Green Cases	In-person	Virtual to In-person	In-person
Yellow Positivity / Yellow Cases	In-person	Virtual	In-person
Yellow Positivity / Red Cases	Virtual	Virtual	Virtual
Red Positivity / Yellow Cases	Virtual	Virtual	Virtual
Green Positivity / Red Cases	Virtual	Virtual	Virtual
Red Positivity / Green Cases	Virtual	Virtual	Virtual
Red Positivity / Red Cases	Virtual	Virtual	Virtual

In the models above, there are times when some students may be learning virtually while others are learning face-to-face. In general, we believe that the need for greater mitigation strategies (such as when the health indicators are all yellow) may call for limiting which students are in school. That is why there are times when only certain student groups might be in school, including pre-K through grade 5, grade 6 and 9, and designated students such as some students with disabilities and English learners. These grades and selected student groups were identified based upon health statistics, the importance of support for students in transitional years, operational planning and our ability to create quality instructional cohorts of students.

Once School is Open

Using the health data designations noted above, families, students and staff will need to be prepared to transition between virtual and in-person instruction. In general, we will follow the guidelines above, although the individual circumstances (school level, community level) may dictate a different timeline or decision across schools. In every case, we will work with the Virginia Department of Health to make and communicate those decisions. For more information see the FAQs [here](#).

Registration

VBCPS, while focusing on safety, health and social-emotional wellness of our students and staff has created an outline for the Fall 2020 options for our families. Utilizing the details in the below section outlining planned health and safety mitigations and in the above section outlining the VBCPS Fall 2020 Plan, the division will be moving forward with offering two registration options.

As a part of the Fall Registration Verification process, you will be asked to confirm your final choice for your student's return to school for Fall 2020 using the options below.

- **Option 1: Face-to-Face Learning**

- Parents/legal guardians who have selected this option are allowing their students to go to school as part of a face-to-face model, when available, using the health parameters as outlined. If health metrics prevent students from attending school face-to-face, students would be moved to an online learning model with their teachers until it was deemed safe to return to a face-to-face model, which would be available only to those who selected this option.

- **Option 2: VBCPS Virtual Learning Center**

- Parents/legal guardians who have selected this option will have their VBCPS student attend school in a completely virtual/online format. This option does not allow for a face-to-face school model, and these students will only attend in a strictly virtual setting, while still remaining enrolled in Virginia Beach City Public Schools. Parents who select this model should understand that their student must remain in the virtual program through the first semester before any change can be considered.

VBCPS PLANNED HEALTH AND SAFETY MITIGATIONS

When staff and students are physically present in our buildings, either for on-site work or for face-to-face instruction, VBCPS is committed to their safety first. The following health mitigation and instructional strategies will be in place:

- Cloth face coverings will be required for students, staff and authorized visitors within all school buildings, facilities, bus stops and busses, unless individuals provide documentation from a health care provider that they are unable to wear a face covering due to a health condition, or for developmental reasons.*
- Adults practice 6-foot physical distancing, conduct virtual in lieu of in-person meetings and avoid congregating in shared places such as break rooms or staff work rooms.
- Students assigned to cohorts where feasible to minimize interactions with staff and other students.
- Student desks are separated by three feet where feasible.
- Exercise and other activities that increase exhalation, i.e. singing, take place outdoors or where appropriate social distancing can be maintained.
- Arrival and dismissal plans support social distancing, i.e. designated entrances by grade level, unload/load buses one at a time, etc.

- The number of visitors allowed into a building is limited. Visits by authorized adults, including parents, should be arranged by appointment.
- Materials--such as student supplies, lab equipment and computers-- are shared as little as possible.
- Protective partitions are placed in strategic locations in school buildings, e.g. high traffic areas, small group instruction areas, etc.
- Students and staff who are sick or have been exposed to COVID-19 are required to stay home and self-quarantine for 14 days.
- Large gatherings are suspended. This includes pep rallies, faculty meetings, etc.
- Field trips both within and outside the Hampton Roads area are postponed until further notice.
- Staff have been and will be trained on how to talk to and support children during and after this pandemic.

*Early data shows a face-shield is 95% effective in preventing the transmission of droplets from the mouth into the air or towards another individual in close proximity from the mouth. A face shield can be considered if a cloth-face covering cannot be used.

Health Services

- Employees will be provided health and safety return-to-work training to provide understanding of COVID procedures.
- A health screening tool will be provided for daily use by students and staff.
- VBCPS will maintain an inventory of disposable masks.
- VBCPS will establish health protocols to evaluate individuals in school with illness signs/symptoms.
- VBCPS will respond to inquiries of reported cases in schools and division facilities.
- VBCPS will designate quarantine rooms or space separate from school clinics.
- VBCPS will utilize touchless, infrared thermometers in the clinic setting.
- VBCPS will create a school nurse substitute list and train backup staff.
- Daily absenteeism of employees and students will be monitored.
- VBCPS will continue to pursue community partnerships to support mental health for children.
- If a case(s) is detected in our schools, we will work with the VDH on contact tracing and make a decision on whether or not to close the school (or schools) on a case by case basis.
- Return to school guidelines for staff or students will be determined in partnership with VDH on a case by case basis. Individuals who have tested positive will be released for return by their health care provider.

Facility Protocols

Public Health Signage

- Signage will be posted in classrooms, hallways, office spaces, and entrances to communicate the following:
 - Covid-19 symptoms
 - How to stop the spread and preventative measures (including staying home when sick)
 - Good hygiene (including hand washing with soap and water)
- School and district specific protocols include:
 - Providing physical guides to promote social distancing:
 - Tape on floors to signal appropriate distancing
 - Directional signage will be posted at building entrances
 - One-way routes in hallways/lanes in hallways

Enhanced Facility Cleaning/Environmental

- Enhanced cleaning protocols will be implemented (high touch surfaces, restrooms, etc.)
- Safe and effective cleaner will be provided to all teachers and office staff to use on high touch surfaces throughout the day
- Response protocols will be in place for facilities impacted by COVID-19
- Hand sanitizer will be provided at building entrances and throughout the building
- Continue to monitor and investigate HVAC/indoor air quality

Safe Schools

- A comprehensive assessment of all safety protocols and procedures is being conducted to ensure a safe and secure environment for our students and staff, while also mitigating virus transmission.
- Emergency drills will be modified to incorporate proper distancing while still preparing staff and students to react appropriately during an emergency. Training on these modifications will occur before drills are conducted.

Food Services

- While students are engaged in virtual instruction, school meals will continue to be made available. At this time, the meal flexibilities provided by USDA during the spring shutdown have not been extended into the fall semester. Under current USDA guidance, student meals will be based on individual student eligibility as during the regular school year. Parents will be provided a mechanism for ordering and receiving school meals and will be notified when the new free and reduced meal applications have been made available by USDA.
- When face-to-face instruction begins, a flexible food distribution model that utilizes cafeteria serving lines as well as flexible serving stations will be implemented in-line with established CDC and VDH safety protocols. Students will be served meals in the cafeteria or at flex stations to be consumed in the classroom, in the cafeteria, or other appropriate locations that support distancing and include cleaning mitigations. A variety of pre-assembled, reimbursable meal options will be offered, and students may select additional meal components, including vegetable, fruit, grain and milk. Students will not be permitted to self-serve any items, including food, milk, condiments and utensils.
- Food safety and meal accountability training will be delivered to staff and volunteers as needed, with an emphasis on:
 - Mandatory masks for cafeteria staff
 - Frequent handwashing
 - Enhanced cleaning, sanitizing and disinfecting procedures, in addition to regular, stringent cleaning measures for food safety
- To reduce physical contact, cafeterias will use cashless transactions only. Students will use barcode scanners instead of the traditional keypads at cashiers' stations. Parents will be encouraged to pay for meals online via their School Café Account.
- Protocols will be developed to send checks or cash in advance of meal service.
- Applications for free or reduced-price meals should be completed online. Parents will be notified of the link when the new applications have been released by USDA for processing.

Transportation

General Requirements – Parents

- Complete school bus transportation request form for each child to be assigned to a school bus stop
- Only students registered for transportation will be able to board the school bus (see the FAQ section on non-compliance)
- The assigned school bus stop must be used
- Parents are strongly encouraged to transport students through other methods or permit walking or riding a bicycle
- Student masks are required
- Families are *required* to complete a VBCPS health screening prior to (arrival at bus stop) transportation services
- Alternate stop locations (childcare, for example) need to be clearly defined (morning/afternoon)

Student Requirements – At the Bus Stop

- Students are expected to wear a face mask and maintain physical distancing at the bus stop
- Load the bus quickly in a calm and orderly fashion while maintaining distancing

Student Requirements – On the Bus

VBCPS continues to evaluate the appropriateness of physical distancing on school busses that impacts capacity. Guidance on this is changing and suggests that students who wear masks and sit in a regularly assigned seat (with the same student each day) may sit with as many as 2 students per seat. Expectations for seating will be communicated before in-person instruction begins. At a minimum, students will be expected to:

- Wear a face mask
- Sit in a designated, assigned seat. Seats not to be used will be marked with an X.
- Avoid touching surfaces with hands when possible
- Unload in a seat-by-seat manner starting from the front seats
- No eating and/or drinking will be permitted on the bus.

Bus Health Mitigation Strategies

- School buses will be disinfected with a CDC approved disinfectant after the morning and afternoon routes
- High touch areas will be wiped down between routes
- Drivers will wear personal protective equipment with the following guidance:
 - Only when interacting with student
 - Can be removed when driving
- When weather permits, windows will be lowered for ventilation.

Human Resources

VBCPS is committed to providing a safe workplace for all employees. To that end, we will ensure employees have the resources needed to feel comfortable returning. Components of a reopening plan for employees include the following:

- Flexible Work and Leave Options - Provide updated resources and procedures, including:
 - A new Remote Working regulation
 - Support accessing Emergency Paid Sick Leave and expanded FMLA leave under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA), and other related benefits; and
 - Use of EEOC, CDC, and VDH resources to assist employees who may need workplace accommodations.
- Personal Protective Equipment - Ensure employees have the necessary personal protective resources, as appropriate for their risk exposure, such as masks, gloves, face shields, etc.
- Employee Assistance Program for employees needing various supports.

CENTERING EQUITY

As we begin planning for a return to school, our commitment to ensuring Virginia Beach City Public Schools (VBCPS) provides equitable educational opportunities to all students is unwavering. We will continue to provide guidance and support to our schools and departments to mitigate the effects of COVID-19 on our students and staff to the greatest extent possible. The key steps below were informed by the work of the Return to School Recovery Task Force and its Equity Planning Subcommittee at the VDOE.

Key Steps to Ensuring Equity During Reopening

To ensure equity during reopening we will:

- Prioritize the physical and social-emotional needs of particularly vulnerable students. Ensure safety, belonging and mental health as a foundation for learning.
- Continue to identify and supply internet access through hotspots to families and communities in need.
- Centralize communication to ALL families by translating instructional materials and communication in home-languages for families and making home visits when possible under safety conditions.
- Identify students experiencing learning gaps now and develop strategies to mitigate the longer-term impact of school closures on these students.

TEACHING AND LEARNING METHODS AND STRATEGIES

As a result of the extended school closure, we recognize the importance of the need to find efficient and effective ways to determine learning gaps that have manifested and grown since the closure. Through revisions to curricula and pacing, professional learning, and adjustments to assessment practices, we have been working diligently to prepare teachers and students for face-to-face and virtual instruction upon our return in the Fall.

It is the goal of Virginia Beach City Public Schools (VBCPS) to provide all students with a high-quality and meaningful educational experience for the 2020-2021 school year. The Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) released [Recover-Redesign-Restart](#), a comprehensive plan that moves Virginia learners and educators forward. VBCPS is following guidance from VDOE to meet the needs of all learners and support teachers in effective planning, teaching and assessing.

Additionally, as we plan for teaching and learning, we are cognizant of the needs of our most vulnerable student groups including early learners, English Learners, students experiencing homelessness, students from low socio-economic backgrounds, struggling readers and students with disabilities. Achieving equity in returning to school in a face-to-face or virtual environment requires us to be strategic and intentional in supporting our students. As such, our preparation for instruction falls into four areas:

- **Equity**- Focusing on providing opportunity and access, utilizing culturally responsive teaching practices and fostering supportive, school-home partnerships

- **Educational Excellence-** Emphasizing Social Emotional Learning, student ownership, key standards and solid curricula, and using data-driven instruction
- **Collaboration-** Leveraging instructional coaching to build staff capacity, collaborating across disciplines and departments, creating strong collegial partnerships, and encouraging personal, professional growth
- **Recovery-** Emphasizing student well-being, utilizing resources efficiently and effectively, and strategically addressing remediation and acceleration

In addition to focusing on equity, educational excellence, collaboration and recovery, we are also paying close attention to the technology needs of our students, how much instruction was lost, student privacy in virtual spaces, and how we assess learning in an ongoing manner.

We are using data collected from the Continuity of Learning Plan, Emergency Learning Plan, Summer Learning, and our face-to-face, Extended School Year summer program to provide the best teaching and learning opportunities for students, staff, and families. As a result, plans for the 2020-21 school year to address curriculum, instruction, and assessment involve more rigor and differentiation than what was experienced in the Spring of 2020. Other differences include:

- Curriculum and instruction will be more robust and will focus on both recovery and deeper learning. Staff have identified all standards that may have been impacted from the extended closure and revised sequence documents to ensure teacher clarity.
- Assessments will be a regular part of the learning process. Assignments for any virtual learning will be graded, with feedback provided.
- Attendance is required and will be monitored. Students will be expected to participate in daily, real-time synchronous (live) learning.
- Professional learning for our teachers and staff will be ongoing as VBCPS works to make sure they are able to enhance the instructional experiences for students.
- Other specific supports that will be provided include: improved digital resources to support learning; supports for students with disabilities; supports for English learners; and, a continued focus on positive behavioral support.
- Social and emotional learning will be a key aspect of daily instruction.

As has been discussed, families will have the option to enroll students in either face-to-face instruction (Option 1) with some temporary virtual learning or 100% virtual instruction in the Virginia Beach Virtual Learning Center (VLC) (Option 2). Our preparation for teaching and learning in both options applies best practice to develop differentiated instruction that is aligned to the Virginia Standards of Learning. Students will have a daily schedule for both virtual and face-to-face instruction. Daily virtual learning will include a combination of both synchronous (live) and asynchronous instruction. Details are found below.

Curriculum and Instruction

The Department of Teaching and Learning (DTAL) has been making adjustments to curriculum, instruction and assessment to address gaps in instruction and to effectively support teachers and students in the 2020-2021 school year. We also continue to examine best practices to be used for face-to-face and virtual learning. We closely monitor the VDOE guidelines and recommendations to adjust curriculum and instruction accordingly to meet the needs of our students, teachers and families. Modifications and enhancements made to our curriculum are grounded in research, based on teacher and administrator feedback, and VDOE guidelines.

DTAL staff have identified all standards that may have been impacted from the extended closure and revised sequence documents to ensure teacher clarity. In planning curriculum and instruction adjustments, we identified four areas on which to focus:

- **Content Connections and Progressions**- to determine the depth and complexity of content from grade level to grade level
- **Curricula and pacing**- that needed to be thoughtfully reviewed and revised to address missing content
- **Professional Learning**- that needed to be ongoing to support teachers, students, and parents
- **Deeper Learning** - opportunities for students to demonstrate mastery of the 5Cs, practice attributes of the VBCPS Graduate Profile, apply learning to real-world issues, personalize learning, leverage technology to support learning, and engage in transformational learning experiences

We have also created and secured resources to assist teachers with teaching essential skills. Social Emotional Learning skills and culturally responsive practices and strategies that will assist students with transitioning back to school have been integrated into curriculum and made available to teachers at all grade levels.

Through synchronous (live) learning opportunities, the classroom teacher, specialists, and interventionists will ensure students are provided with a high-quality learning experience that often leverages small-group instruction. Clear expectations and guidelines for effective instruction, utilizing culturally responsive practices, and providing social and emotional support for our students will be shared with all teachers.

In addition to core instruction, it is also our priority to ensure students have access to physical and health education, the arts, elective classes, and recess.

Assessment and Grading

Student learning will be graded, and students can expect that the assignment submission requirements will be greater. Teachers will also have multiple opportunities to participate in professional learning on providing students with feedback in a virtual environment. The Department of Teaching and Learning is working to modify the division benchmark timeline and assessment requirements as we reopen schools. An emphasis has been placed on streamlining diagnostic assessment practices and focusing on tools that provide the needed data to plan for instruction, intervention and extension in small group settings.

The most important assessment of student learning is conducted by teachers as they observe and evaluate students in the context of ongoing instructional activities. Teachers will have access to embedded resources,

including assessments that are needed to address learning gaps in naturally integrated ways during the 2020-2021 school year. In order to revise the curriculum accordingly, curriculum coordinators analyzed pacing and curriculum to identify essential standards and have enhanced resources within each unit.

Teachers will revisit balanced assessment practices through ongoing professional learning sessions to enhance and report student achievement, per School Board of the City of Virginia Beach Policy 6-72 (Student Evaluation and Grading). Modifications to the VBCPS assessment program have been made to support effective teaching and learning for the 2020-2021 school year and have been designed to support all students, no matter if they need remediation or acceleration. For example, additional pre-assessments have been added to the curriculum for the 2020-2021 school year to assist teachers with identifying any potential learning gaps so they may effectively differentiate for all learners.

Teachers of English learners will continue to assess student needs both formally, using the World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) Screener and Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State (ACCESS) assessment, and informally during class time. They will continue to provide direct instruction in language acquisition by using the elective/resource model, as well as by pushing into core content classes to provide instruction to English learners.

Attendance

Attendance will be required and will be monitored. Students will be expected to participate in daily, real-time, synchronous (live) learning. Students who do not attend class will be marked absent. Appropriate interventions will be put in place for students who need it.

Professional Learning

Professional learning will be provided to ensure teachers feel supported and successful in their delivery of content and so that students will have the opportunity to experience a rigorous and relevant educational experience. More specifically, ongoing, job-embedded professional learning will be offered that is focused on synchronous (live) and asynchronous (independent, not live) learning tools, giving quality feedback, assessment and grading practices. Our teachers will be well prepared to teach in both a face-to-face and virtual environment.

Digital Resources to Support Learning

We heard concerns that it was often difficult to find different digital applications that were used and that it often took too many “clicks” to find an assignment. To address this, VBCPS is working to provide a more consistent course set-up in Schoology. In addition, VBCPS provides a rich suite of digital resources for students at all levels. Recognizing that it can be difficult to navigate the numerous resources, a new, easy to use VB Schools Application Portal called ClassLink will be implemented for access to digital resources on all student devices. This solution will make it much easier for families to find and access the applications needed to complete school work. Training and support resources for the new application portal will be available for students, staff and families. We will also provide ongoing training and support to families to be able to assist students with accessing and navigating digital resources at home.

The use of current digital resources will ensure students have consistent access to high-quality learning tools. Staff will continue to receive training and support in applying virtual learning strategies which involve a mix of teacher-directed and self-directed learning. Differentiated, digital applications will continue to be available to students, and data collected will allow teachers to provide enrichment or remediation where needed. We will continue to monitor virtual learning strategies and create resources for staff and parents to support student learning.

Supports for Students with Disabilities

Special education teachers will provide specially designed instruction that adapts, as appropriate, the content, methodology, or delivery of instruction to meet the needs of students with disabilities and to ensure access to the general curriculum.

Students with disabilities will receive special education services to address IEP (Individualized Education Program) goals as determined by the IEP team. Explicit instruction with clear expectations and practice will be provided to support any student receiving virtual instruction. In addition, students will receive access to instructional materials and assistive technology tools, as required by the IEP, for use at home. Collaborative teaching practices and supports will be implemented to ensure students with disabilities continue to be educated in the least restrictive environment.

The IEP team will meet to discuss any needed modifications to the IEP based on parent/legal guardian selection of instructional options. For those parent/legal guardians who selected Option 1: Face-to Face Learning, the IEP team will also discuss needed modifications to the IEP, which may be required due to a transition to temporary virtual instruction based on health metrics.

Students eligible under Section 504 will be given appropriate accommodations based upon the documented disability. Students with Section 504 Plans will be supported by the Office of Student Support Services, the designated Section 504 Administrator and Section 504 Coordinator at the building level. Teachers will be given Section 504 Plans at the beginning of the academic school year and will communicate regularly with Section 504 administrators and coordinators on any needed revisions. Programs offered to all students in the general education environment in-person or virtually, will also be offered to students under Section 504 (equal access). When necessary, virtual or face-to-face meetings will be convened as noted in the Section 504 Guidelines to include eligibility, annual review and re-evaluation meetings.

Supports for English Learners

All English learners will receive direct instruction and support from their English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers in either the virtual or face-to-face environment. At the elementary level, most direct instruction will take place as the ESL teacher pushes into instruction in math, science, social studies, and Language Arts. In addition, ESL teachers will use formative assessment to determine students who may benefit from small-group, pull-out instruction, when necessary. Middle school English learners whose English proficiency levels are between 1.0 and 2.5 will be provided direct instruction through a designated resource class with the ESL teacher to focus on intensive instruction in English language acquisition. Middle school students with proficiency levels 2.6 and higher will receive direct instruction as the ESL teacher pushes into instruction in the core content areas (math, science, social studies, English). High school English learners will receive direct instruction through ESL elective courses that focus on English language acquisition and are taught by the ESL teacher. Select students will receive intensive support in the Newcomer Program at Landstown High School.

Social Emotional Learning (SEL) and Supports

Students have been through a fair amount of emotional trauma in the past few months, so when we return to school, teachers will be encouraged to focus on students' social and emotional needs as well as academics. That said, VBCPS anticipates the far-reaching impacts of the global COVID-19 pandemic will have lasting effects on students, families, staff and communities. And as a result, VBCPS will implement curricula and supports designed to strengthen relationships, nurture students' social-emotional development, and ease the transition back to schools, classrooms and learning environments. To best prepare for in-person or virtual learning, school staff will engage in professional learning opportunities aimed at building the capacity of our staff to address student, family and community needs. An increased awareness of and access to community mental health supports will help ensure various levels of assistance are readily available for all stakeholders.

Social and Emotional Learning will be a key aspect of daily instruction. We will ensure check-ins occur with students who may need additional support, morning announcements may still be available to students, flip grid and other collaborative tools such as threaded discussions and more will be used to promote social skills and a feeling of connectedness. School guidance lessons will be done synchronously and asynchronously as well.

Social emotional support for families are available through the school counseling program. School counselors are available to assist students and families with resources and other supports to meet their individual needs. Below are a few resources that may be used until families are able to connect with their child's school counselor.

[Social Skills Resources for Parents](#)

[Social Emotional Learning at Home \(K-2nd Grade\)](#)

[Social Emotional Learning at Home \(Grades 3-5\)](#)

[Resources for Families During the Coronavirus Pandemic](#)

[Apps to Help with Mental Health](#)

Positive Behavior Interventions Supports

We will continue to leverage Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) to develop division-wide supports for student attendance, behavior, and social emotional well-being. Our goal is to build upon our practice of fostering inclusive environments that support and strengthen the physical and mental health of all students and staff.

Face-to-Face and Virtual Learning Center Schedules

The schedules for face-to-face and virtual learning options were developed to provide a consistent, predictable schedule that supports families as they support their students' learning. An emphasis has been placed on synchronous (live) learning in both options. Furthermore, the schedules provide adequate time for teachers to communicate and connect with students on a consistent basis, especially with those students who are not submitting assignments or those not checking in on the digital platforms. Finally, the schedules recognize the importance of students maintaining a connection to the arts and personal health and wellness.

Elementary students' schedules will include instruction in all core content areas, electives courses such as music, art, and physical education, and recess. Additionally, the counselor and teachers will be available periodically during the week to hold designated office hours. Below is a sample schedule for elementary schools but may be adjusted to fit the individual needs at each campus.

Sample Elementary Schedule

AM	Teacher Asynchronous Morning Message Posted
AM	Morning Meeting, Synchronous
AM	Core Content Lesson
AM	Recess/Physical Activity
AM	Language Arts Block: Reading Small Group 9:45-10:15 Synchronous Independent literacy and content integration task
AM/PM	Lunch & Recess/Playtime Elective Lesson
PM	Math Block: Math Small Group & independent numeracy task
PM	Recess/Physical Activity
PM	Closing Circle, Synchronous
PM	Teacher Office Hours (Twice weekly)

Sample Middle School Schedule

At the middle school level, schedules have been adjusted to limit contact groups. The daily academic schedule has been changed from six to three blocks on a semester basis. Students will meet with three of their six classes per semester. Breakfast in the classroom and daily SEL lessons have been added for all students embedded within their first block class and lunch will be served in the classroom. Passing times for electives students will be staggered to minimize group contact. Below is a sample schedule for middle schools but may be adjusted to fit the individual needs at each campus.

Monday	Times	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Students: Asynchronous learning Teachers: Planning, Professional Learning, Preparation, PLCs, Office Hours	AM	Breakfast/SEL	Breakfast/SEL	Breakfast/SEL	Breakfast/SEL
	AM	Core 1	Core 1	Core 1	Core 1
	PM	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
	PM	Core 2	Core 2	Core 2	Core 2
	PM	Elective	Elective	Elective	Elective
	PM	Literacy or Numeracy Support	Literacy or Numeracy Support	Literacy or Numeracy Support	Literacy or Numeracy Support

Sample High School Schedule

At the high school level, schedules have been adjusted to limit contact groups. The daily academic schedule has been changed from eight to four blocks on a semester basis. Students will meet with four of their eight classes per semester. Breakfast in the classroom and daily SEL lessons have been added for all students embedded within their first block class and lunch will be served in the classroom. Passing times will be staggered to minimize group contact. Below is a sample schedule for high schools but may be adjusted to fit the individual needs at each campus.

Monday	Times	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Students: Asynchronous learning Teachers: Planning, PL, Preparation, PLC's, Office Hours	AM	1A	1A	1A	1A
	AM	2A	2A	2A	2A
	AM	Advisory/ Lunch/ "Flex Block"	Advisory/ Lunch/ "Flex Block"	Advisory/ Lunch/ "Flex Block"	Advisory/ Lunch/ "Flex Block"
	AM/PM	3A	3A	3A	3A
	PM	4A	4A	4A	4A

TECHNOLOGY AND CONNECTIVITY

The department of technology offers a technical support website, vbcpsupport.com, to help answer a variety of technology related questions including how to reset passwords, technology hardware support for repair or replacement, as well as much more.

Student Devices

All students kindergarten through 12 are assigned a Chromebook. Support for all devices is provided by the Department of Technology. Families should reference vbcpsupport.com if questions arise about the performance or functionality of the Chromebook. The Customer Support Center is also available to answer questions via phone by calling 757-263-1111.

Internet Access

High-speed internet access will be a requirement to participate in virtual learning in the fall and beyond. In today's high-tech learning environments, internet access can become difficult to afford as families are impacted by the economic effects of the pandemic. To help our community, VBCPS compiled a variety of internet support options so, if needed, families may choose which option is most appropriate for them. Available options are listed on the technical support site, vbcpsupport.com/internet-access. The site will continue to be updated as additional options become available.

Digital Resources

The use of current digital resources will ensure students have consistent access to high-quality learning tools regardless of the scenario in which instruction takes place. Staff will continue to receive training and support in applying blended learning strategies which involve a mix of teacher-directed and self-directed learning. Differentiated digital applications will continue to be available to students, and data collected will allow teachers to provide enrichment or remediation where needed. The division will continue to document effective virtual learning strategies and provide professional development and family resources.

VBCPS provides a rich suite of digital resources for students at all levels. Recognizing that it can be difficult to navigate the numerous resources, a new, easy to use VB Schools Application Portal will be implemented for access to digital resources on all student devices. This solution will make it much easier for families to find and access the applications needed to complete school work. Training and support resources for the new application portal will be available for students and staff at all levels.

LOOKING AHEAD

While it is the hope of VBCPS that our students, families and staff never have to experience a global pandemic again, we recognize that COVID-19 or others may arise and cause substantial disruption to the educational setting, learning environments and school as we typically know them. With that in mind, we are working diligently to create a linear plan, which intends to alleviate many of the stressful pieces of transition that have occurred during the COVID-19 closure, which began March 13, 2020.

Connecting with the Division

In the age of technology, it is more important than ever for the division to be available to our families and staff using a variety of methods. Below you will find how you may connect with the division using the official division website, social media, emails and phone numbers.

Website

This link is the only official division website and up-to-date information may be found using the website, www.vbschools.com.

Social Media

- Facebook—@VBSchools
- Twitter—@vbschools
- Instagram—vbschools
- YouTube—VBSchools

Contact Us/Information

- [Frequently called numbers](#)
- [AlertNow](#) (rapid notification system)
- [Division schools list](#)

DRAFT

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Notice of Non-Discrimination Policy

Virginia Beach City Public Schools does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation/gender identity, pregnancy, childbirth or related medical condition, disability, marital status, age, genetic information or veteran status in its programs, activities, employment, or enrollment, and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. School Board policies and regulations (including, but not limited to, Policies 2-33, 4-4, 5-7, 5-19, 5-20, 5-44, 6-33, 6-7, 7-48, 7-49, 7-57 and Regulations 4-4.1, 4-4.2, 5-44.1, 7-11.1, 7-17.1 and 7-57.1) provide equal access to courses, programs, enrollment, counseling services, physical education and athletic, vocational education, instructional materials, extracurricular activities and employment.

Title IX Notice: Complaints or concerns regarding discrimination on the basis of sex or sexual harassment should be addressed to the Title IX Coordinator, at the VBCPS Office of Student Leadership, 1413 Laskin Road, Virginia Beach, Virginia 23451, (757)263-2020, Mary.Dees@vbschools.com (student complaints) or the VBCPS Department of Human Resources, Office of Employee Relations, 2512 George Mason Drive, Municipal Center, building 6, Virginia Beach, Virginia, 23456 (757) 263-1133, Edie.Rogan@vbschools.com (employee complaints). Additional information regarding Virginia Beach City Public Schools' policies regarding discrimination on the basis of sex and sexual harassment, as well as the procedures for filing a formal complaint and related grievance processes, can be found in School Board Policy 5-44 and School Board Regulations 5-44.1 (students), School Board Policy 4-4 and School Board Regulation 4-4.3 (employees), and on the School Division's website. Concerns about the application of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act should be addressed to the Section 504 Coordinator/Executive Director of Student Support Services at (757) 263-1980, 2512 George Mason Drive, Virginia Beach, Virginia, 23456 or the Section 504 Coordinator at the student's school. For students who are eligible or suspected of being eligible for special education or related services under IDEA, please contact the Office of Programs for Exceptional Children at (757) 263-2400, Laskin Road Annex, 1413 Laskin Road, Virginia Beach, Virginia, 23451.

Alternative formats of this publication which may include taped, Braille, or large print materials are available upon request for individuals with disabilities. Call or write Nicole Ingalls, Virginia Beach City Public Schools, 2512 George Mason Drive, P.O. Box 6038, Virginia Beach, VA 23456-0038. Telephone 263-1075 (voice); fax 263-1260; 263-1240 (TDD) or email her at Nicole.Ingalls@vbschools.com.

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