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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

1. If I choose the Blended Model for my child, will s/he remain assigned to our home school and be taught by teachers there?

Yes. Students in the Blended Model will remain enrolled in their home/assigned school and will be taught by teachers assigned to that school.

The exception to this is the occasional instance at the high school level where a student may want to take a course that is not offered in his/her home school. Students may also be enrolled in dual credit courses that are taught by instructors who are not members of the school's faculty. When course requests cannot be accommodated within the master schedule, students may also enroll in courses through VirtualSC, VirtualSC Franchise or Edmentum. **These types of exceptions are not unique to this year.**

2. Does my child have to remain in the Virtual School Program for the entire year? Will you give consideration to allowing a transfer back into the Blended Model at any other time?

Many decisions, such as staffing and transportation routes, are made based on school and program enrollment. Although full-year commitment in the Virtual School Program is preferred, if a family requests a transfer to the Blended Model, we will make every effort to work toward a semester transition, if appropriate space is available. A process for requesting transfer that is fair to all will be developed and publicized at a later date. *(*As previously communicated, our Reopening Schools Plan is one that will evolve. This response represents a change from our original plan.*)*

3. What if we do not have a computer or internet access in our home?

The District's 1:1 initiative is being expanded. All students in grades K-12 will have devices this school year. Parents who are concerned about internet access can contact their school administrator or district office for support through the State Department ORS Online Learning Initiative. The district, along with the state, are working on a plan to provide internet access to all eligible students and homes.

4. What support will be provided to help students and parents gain confidence in using their devices and in accessing digital content used in the classroom, such as Edmentum, Google Classroom, and other district-supported interventions?

Training materials that include student and parent friendly videos as well as documents with screenshots and simple directions are being developed and will be posted to our district's website. Print copies will be made available in our schools, as well. Training

will be provided to parents and students during a face-to-face orientation that will be provided for students in PreK4 through grade 8 during LEAP days. (*See Question 6 below for more information about LEAP days.)

5. What should we do if we have technical issues during Virtual and Blended Models?

Many technical issues can be resolved at the school level. When technical issues cannot be handled by school staff, however, the District has a competent and caring IT team that is ready and willing to provide assistance. Additional information will be provided on the Colleton County School District website and communicated to parents through schools to ensure parents and students know how to reach someone for IT support and times IT support will be accessible.

6. What are LEAP days, and how will they be used?

The South Carolina General Assembly appropriated funds through the CARES Act to allow for five additional days at the start of the 2020-2021 school year for students in PreK through grade 8. Specific dates for LEAP days are August 26, 2020 - September 1, 2020 as identified on the updated District calendar.

All students in PreK through grade 8 will be invited to participate during one of the five LEAP days. Determination about which day students will attend will be announced at the school level. Times for participation will be carefully scheduled to ensure staggered arrivals and departures throughout the day and to accommodate social distancing. During LEAP days, the following types of activities will occur: Students will have an opportunity to meet their teachers and to participate in activities designed to introduce and acclimate them to school and classroom procedures and expectations. Some diagnostic assessments may also be scheduled during this time to assess learning loss. The results of these assessments will help teachers plan more targeted instruction throughout the school year to meet the individual needs of students. Meetings with parents may be held to review the IEPs of students with disabilities (SWDs). Additionally, some evaluations and re-evaluations may be scheduled during this time.

7. Since LEAP days are not provided for students in grades 9 through 12, when will my child meet his/her teachers, be oriented, and pick up his device?

Colleton County High School will provide information about when students in grades 9 through 12 should come to school for orientation and to pick up devices. This time will also be used to introduce and acclimate students to new school procedures and expectations related to COVID-19 for all students attending school face to face in the Blended Model. Students in the Virtual Model will also receive the same orientation so that as soon upon transitioning to the Blended Model, students will know where to go and what to do to ensure their health and safety, as well as the health and safety of others.

8. What can I do now to help my child recover any learning loss that may have occurred?

While we are all concerned about learning loss, research has shown that learning loss can be recovered over time with excellent teachers and targeted instruction. We are very confident in the ability and commitment of our teachers to do everything they can to mitigate learning loss when school reopens. But, we need your help. Parents are encouraged to connect with their child's Google Classroom(s) and Edmentum parent notifications to monitor their child's progress.

9. What curricula will be used while my child is in the Virtual or Blended Model?

The same curricula that would be taught in a typical school year will be used in all phases of both the Virtual or Blended Model. South Carolina standards will be taught.

10. How will I know what work my child is expected to complete?

Specific information will be posted by each teacher weekly (depending on subject and grade level) so that parents and students know what students should be learning, which materials support the learning, and when the learning will be assessed. This expectation has been established in direct response to parents' requests. Parents are encouraged to connect with their child's Google Classroom(s) and Edmentum parent notifications to monitor their child's progress.

11. Will my child be expected to do more or less work in the Virtual or Blended Model?

The amount of work assigned in courses will be developmentally appropriate for each level. If any parent or student believes the amount of work being assigned is too much or too little for their child, they should contact the teacher. If the concern remains following that discussion, the parent should contact the principal.

12. Will schedules look different this year?

Yes. A number of factors will be considered in planning schedules. Examples of these factors include but are not limited to the following: Additional time will be needed during classes so that students can stretch, use the restroom, and have a few minutes for a brain break during the virtual phase of instruction. When students are in the building, additional time must be allowed for transitions due to the need for cleaning, the movement to other locations following social distancing protocols, and restroom breaks (due to the fact that some restroom fixtures may not be usable while maintaining social distancing).

Every effort is being made to create structured Virtual and Blended schedules that will allow students and staff to easily transition to the traditional face-to-face phase. We believe this consistency is important in minimizing disruptions in learning due to transitions. Time will be provided to address social and emotional needs. Office hours for teachers are provided to support student learning needs and parent questions or concerns. When students return to school for either the blended or traditional phases of instruction, it is likely that staggered arrival and dismissals will be required due to transportation. Note that class periods are necessarily shorter to accommodate the factors listed above. Also, please keep in mind that student schedules often vary within a grade level, as well as by school.

13. Will students be sitting at their computers for a long period of time listening to lectures? What will class periods look like?

No. The amount of time designated in the student's schedule for a class period does not mean the child will be in front of the computer the entire time. The schedule reflects the time the class will start and end for purposes of planning. Similar to how multiple activities are shown within "periods" at the elementary level, students and parents should expect multiple types of learning experiences within class periods at the middle and high school levels. *Lessons at all levels should be interactive and engaging.* For example, while part of the lesson will likely involve direct instruction by the teacher, students also need to interact with one another. Small group work with peers is actually one of the best ways to learn. Within our Google platform, students are able to collaborate within *breakout rooms* to have small group discussions and to complete projects within Google Meet. Additionally, students may be assigned independent reading from a text, a writing assignment, or a project that takes them away from the computer for a period of time with follow-up discussion occurring at a designated time later in the class period. In this example, students would be told when they need to "return" to the class.

14. My child's experience with distance learning last spring was not positive. How will the virtual environment be different this year? What is being done to ensure the virtual environment is effective this fall?

There will be no paper packets disseminated this school year. All virtual instruction will occur through the use of Google Classroom and will be supported through the use of Edmentum. Students will experience instruction that mirrors the opportunities given in the school building. Teachers will work from their classrooms. This will ensure they have all the materials they need to support instruction. The District implemented several virtual programs during the summer. The implementation of these programs allowed us to test new strategies and use of software in a fully virtual learning environment. Our summer pilot has positioned us to have already identified the strategies and tools that best support virtual learning, as well as the training that is most helpful to teachers and school leaders.

The quick pivot to distance learning last spring allowed very little time for preparation and practice to support learning. Since late March, however, the District has devoted extensive amounts of time and resources to ensure our teachers and students would be prepared should virtual learning be required this fall or at any time in the future.

15. How will course offerings be determined, and how will the master schedule be built?

Students will be receiving instruction in all content areas as designated in the teacher's daily schedule in grades 4K through grade 8.

At the high school level, core courses and courses needed for graduation are always considered the highest priorities in building the master schedule. Those priorities will not change.

16. How will students be graded?

Grading policies established by the South Carolina Department of Education Uniform Grading Policies and Colleton County School District will be followed.

17. Will attendance be taken during the Virtual and Blended Model?

Yes. Attendance will be taken daily, even on days when the student is not physically present. Each teacher will inform students of how to “check in” on the days they are working from home.

18. Will state assessments be given this year?

Yes. At this time, the South Carolina Department of Education has said that all state assessments will be administered. Information about testing administration will be shared as additional information is made available.

19. Will direct instruction be provided by a teacher?

Yes. During **Virtual Learning**, students will participate in “live” instruction with the teacher and the class. **Blended Learning** - In addition to “live” learning experiences on the days students are learning at school, some recorded (asynchronous) learning experiences may be provided to support learning of some students on days they are working from home. Work with interventionists, sessions with counselors, and other activities that require more independent support for students will be scheduled on these days, as well. A specific schedule will be provided for parents so they will know when their child will work with individual or small groups on days they are not physically present in school. Students will join their classes via Google Classrooms on the days they are working at home so that lessons may continue as if they were physically present in the classroom.

20. Will teachers be teaching from home, as they did last spring? Teaching from home seemed to limit their access to materials.

No. The situation last spring was very different, as the Governor had ordered that school buildings be closed. This fall teachers will report to their classrooms every day, where they will have access to all the materials needed to support effective instruction and student learning.

21. My child has an IEP. How will his needs be addressed during the Virtual and Blended Model?

Students with Disabilities (SWDS) will have equal access to the general curriculum through the ColletonEd Virtual Program, as well as in all phases of the Blended Model: virtual, hybrid, and face-to-face. Individualized Education Program (IEP) teams will meet to determine what services are needed for students based on the instructional

delivery model in which each student will be served. IEP teams will collaborate to develop IEPs that are aligned to the instructional delivery model chosen by the student's parents. IEPs will be amended to meet the individual needs of students. If you have specific questions regarding your child's needs, please do not hesitate to call the Office of Special Services at (843)782-0022.

22. How will the needs of ESOL students be met?

When the district is operating in the **Virtual and Blended Model**, ESOL students will receive the following accommodations and modifications based on their English proficiency levels. Core content area teachers and ESOL teachers will work together to ensure equitable access to learning activities and academic success for the ESOL population. ESOL teachers will plan with core teachers to provide targeted virtual interventions as necessary to ensure participation and academic support. Secondary level English Learners will receive services and support as outlined by their scheduled courses. English Learners will participate in synchronous and asynchronous learning opportunities.

23. What will PE, band, weightlifting, chorus and other classes that require movement be like this year? Last spring my child had to do homework that included journaling, reading, or recording requirements. Will that be expected this year?

Learning about lifetime fitness and applying that knowledge is part of the reflection and formative assessment process that should be integrated with physical activity in physical education classes. Physical education courses *should* include journaling, reading, and recording requirements, in combination with physical activity. These are meaningful, standards-based activities that should occur, even in "normal" times. Students will be expected to complete these kinds of activities in virtual or blended instruction.

Presentation/performance is an integral part of courses such as theatre, band, and chorus. Because of the way COVID-19 is transmitted, however, additional health and safety concerns must be considered as we make plans for these courses in the fall.

With a goal of ensuring students in our performing arts classes have experiences that are as normal as possible while keeping them as safe as possible, the Colleton Visual and Performing Arts Department in collaboration with our teachers has developed a plan that takes into consideration guidance from the AccelerateEd Task Force, the National Association for Music Education, and the CDC. The plan is currently under review. Additional information will be shared after the review has been completed.

24. Much has been written about the impact of COVID-19 on the social and emotional health and well-being of students. What strategies will the district use to address these concerns?

1. A plan to address the social and emotional needs of students has been developed. It includes but is not limited to the following strategies:
Schools will implement social and emotional learning into curricula with emphasis on reassuring the health and safety of students:

- Age-appropriate resources that promote social and emotional health will be made available on the Colleton County School District Website.
- A tiered plan has been developed to contact any child who does not report to class (virtually or in-person). This plan includes but is not limited to the use of counseling contacts, bus stop visits by school staff to see students, home visits for wellness checks, and collaboration with appropriate agencies to provide individualized support.
- Schools will provide ongoing support by orchestrating opportunities with students, parents, and staff for the purposes of relationship building and sharing of experiences.
- Schools will reinforce their multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) for students, parents, and staff through increased services.

26. Will there be after school/extended day programs while we are in virtual learning?

No. There will be no after school/extended day programs during the eLearning phase. We will continue to monitor COVID-19 activity, as well as CDC and DHEC guidance, and hope we can make changes as we progress to different phases of the Blended Model.

27. I've heard that teachers have received no professional development to help them get ready for the return of school. Has any training been provided and, if so, did anyone actually participate?

Training has been provided throughout the summer months and will continue throughout the school year. Several different trainings have been provided in the use of Google Classroom, Edmentum, and Effective Instructional Practices in the Virtual Environment. As additional needs are identified, professional development opportunities will be offered to all faculty and staff to address the identified needs.

Professional learning opportunities will be provided on professional development days throughout the school calendar year. There will be an intentional focus on using technology in the content areas to strengthen our instructional practices.

28. Will every class at my child's high school be offered in the ColletonED Virtual Program?

To every extent possible, all classes offered at your child's high school will be a part of the Virtual Program. Students participating in the School Program will be taking the courses in which they are enrolled according to their transcripts. Some students, however, may seek approval from the principal to take a course offered outside of the regular high school course offerings by taking a course through VirtualSC or a dual enrollment program.

29. Will every class in the Virtual or Blended Model at all schools have a teacher?

All classes will have a teacher. The expectation is the majority of the teachers will be Colleton County School District teachers; however, some of the teachers may be those that teach courses with VirtualSC or at a post-secondary institution (example: dual enrollment instructors). Some circumstances may require a teacher from another school to teach students. This may occur when there is very low student enrollment in a class, and classes have to be combined with another school.

30. How many days per week will the students receive online instruction from a teacher?

Students will have online, “live” instruction from teachers. The number of days and daily minutes will vary depending on the course and the school’s schedule.

31. How many students will be in each virtual class?

Students’ transcripts will be analyzed. Students will then be enrolled in the required courses for graduation and program pathways. The number of students will vary from class to class, as is traditionally the case, and will be within state guidelines.

32. Does my child have to remain in the ColletonED Virtual Program for the entire year? Will you give consideration to allowing a transfer back into the Blended Model at any other time?

Many decisions, such as staffing and transportation routes, are made based on school and program enrollment. Although full-year commitment in the ColletonED Virtual Program is preferred, if a family requests a transfer to the Blended Model, we will make every effort to work toward a semester transition, if appropriate space is available. A formalized process for requesting a transfer that is fair to all will be developed and published by the district at a later date.

33. Does my child need to wear school uniforms on the 2 days they attend in-person?

Yes, students will still be required to wear their uniforms on the 2 in-person days.