

To: Dr. Charles Johns
Board of Education

From: Learning Plan Development Team

Date: Monday, June 8, 2020

Re: Learning Plan for the 2020-21 School Year

Recommendation

At this time, no recommendation is being proposed for approval by the Board of Education. This document has been developed for the sole purpose of beginning a dialogue about the learning plan for the 2020-21 school year.

The working draft plan presented within this memo is grounded in the assumption that students will be required to maintain the Restore Illinois Phase 4 guidelines including, social distancing, face masks, and groupings smaller than 50. We anticipate that the interpretation of these guidelines may change during the course of the next few months.

Background

As a result of the coronavirus pandemic, Governor J.B. Pritzker issued an Executive Order mandating all public and nonpublic schools close through March 30, 2020¹. On March 31, 2020, Governor Pritzker extended the school closure². Finally, on April 30, 2020, Governor Pritzker announced that all schools will remain closed throughout the remainder of the 2019-20 school year³.

In response to these orders, Glenbrook students and teachers transitioned from a face-to-face learning experience to one that is facilitated through the use of technology tools in an e-learning environment. Recognizing the challenges associated with transitioning a large high school district to a new instructional delivery model, district leaders, instructional coaches, and technology support personnel worked closely with our teachers to provide professional development opportunities from Monday, March 16, 2020, through Friday, March 27, 2020 (including the week of spring break). These opportunities were scheduled throughout the day, evening, and weekend hours, and included:

- Department-wide meetings for all staff to virtually gather and discuss content-specific questions in the transition to e-learning;
- Group sessions demonstrating how to create synchronous and asynchronous learning activities for their students using existing and new software tools;
- One-on-one appointments to address any technical issues (e.g., cameras not functioning, additional software installations, home network troubleshooting); and
- Open invitation drop-in sessions to discuss any question regarding e-learning, from both pedagogical and technical perspectives.

¹ [Executive Order 2020-05; COVID-19 Executive Order No. 3](#) (March 13, 2020).

² [Executive Order 2020-10; COVID-19 Executive Order No. 8](#) (March 20, 2020).

³ [Executive Order 2020-33; COVID-19 Executive Order No. 31](#) (April 30, 2020).

Glenbrook formally transitioned to e-learning on Tuesday, March 31, 2020, with professional development opportunities being offered to teachers on an ongoing basis. Prior to our first day of instruction using this new mode, the Illinois State Board of Education issued guidance outlining how student work shall be assessed during what they described as “remote learning days”:

Student work completed during the suspension of in-person instruction must not negatively impact a student’s grades or otherwise impact a student’s academic standing. As we do not yet know the full extent of the closure and want to minimize any negative effects on students, schools may allow student work to count during the closure only to increase a student’s academic standing. Our students may be experiencing varying mental and physical health challenges at this time and may have very different access to supports and technology at home. Our goal is that no student is negatively impacted by the closure and that no school district’s policies or procedures should widen the equity gap.⁴

In response to this guidance, the administration, in partnership with the Glenbrook Education Association (GEA), implemented the following protocols to guide Glenbrook’s e-learning program:

- Students would continue to be issued letter grades for each course. However, we will now use A, B, C, D, I (Incomplete), instead of A - F. No grade of F will be assigned for any student for any course at the end of the second semester. An Incomplete will be assigned in its place, and we will use the normal process to encourage students to complete missing work and earn a grade for the course.
- A baseline grade was established for all student course enrollments. Teachers were provided until Wednesday, April 1, 2020, at 9:00 PM to update their grade book with any outstanding work that was assigned prior to the school closure. Grades were subsequently extracted from PowerSchool and shared with students, parents, and teachers. These grades represented the lowest grade that a student would receive for the second semester. Teachers continued to provide opportunities for students to increase their grades.
- A survey of students and staff was conducted at the end of the first week of e-learning and as a result adjustments were made to student attendance procedures and the development of a schedule to support optional synchronous learning sessions
- Throughout the e-learning experience, students continued to follow the A(Gold)/B(Blue) schedule. All teachers were asked to plan between 45 and 90 minutes of work for students to complete each day. Students were also asked to submit an online attendance form each day, indicating that they are participating in e-learning activities.
- To provide additional opportunities for teachers to plan future e-learning experiences, and to enhance their own skills by receiving additional training, remote learning planning days granted by ISBE were implemented each Wednesday. These represented five non-student attendance days during April and May.
- A schedule was implemented during the third week of e-learning that enabled teachers to schedule optional synchronous online meetings with their students. The schedule provided the ability for teachers to schedule sessions, without the complication of overlapping one another’s efforts.
- The school district requirement that all courses shall conclude with a final evaluation (Board Policy 7260) was waived for the second semester of the 2019-20 school year.

⁴ [Mandatory Suspension of In-Person Instruction Guidance for Illinois Schools and School Districts](#) (April 1, 2020).

As the 2019-20 school year comes to a close, the Illinois State Board of Education has provided initial guidance for reopening schools in the fall. While reopening will look different in different regions of the state, it is likely that highly populated areas will implement some form of e-learning when students return this fall. For Glenbrook, e-learning will be different than it was this spring in the following ways:

- Teachers will provide a combination of required synchronous and asynchronous learning activities following the A(Gold)/B(Blue) daily schedule. New content will be introduced during required e-learning sessions as it would in a regular face-to-face setting.
- Students will be required to engage in the learning activities assigned by their teachers each day, and will receive grades as they would in a regular face-to-face setting. Daily attendance procedures will be followed. As part of this, parents will be expected to notify the school should their child need to be absent from school on a given day, or a part of the day.
- As long as it is safe to do so, the school buildings will remain open throughout the school day for permitted scheduled activities, and access to essential resources to support students (e.g., counselors, social workers, special education support).

The draft plan that follows represents the ongoing efforts of the administration and the Glenbrook Education Association to develop a plan for learning in the 2020-21 school year. We are continuing to monitor the public health situation within Cook County and the Glenview/Northbrook communities. Members of our leadership team also remain in constant communication with the Illinois State Board of Education and our neighboring school districts (both elementary and high school), to share our thoughts and learn from each other. The administration will continue to keep the Board informed with updates to the draft plan throughout the summer months.

Learning Plan for the 2020-21 School Year

A team has been established to create the 2020-21 learning plan for the Glenbrook High Schools. Initial members of this team include:

- Administration
 - Dr. Charles Johns
 - Dr. R.J. Gravel
 - Mr. Brad Swanson
 - Dr. Rosanne Williamson
 - Dr. John Finan
 - Dr. Lauren Fagel
 - Mr. Jason Markey
 - Dr. Jennifer Pearson
 - Additional Administrators as Needed
- Glenbrook Education Association (GEA)
 - Mr. Matt Whipple
 - Mr. Bob LeBlanc
 - Ms. Sharon Sheehan
 - Ms. Pearl Lee

Over the next several weeks we plan to gather feedback on our draft plan from members of our support staff employee groups (e.g., instructional assistants, paraprofessionals, clerical and specialist personnel), parents, and students. **We are also in the process of analyzing results from two e-learning feedback surveys that inform our work.** An essential goal in the development of this plan is to ensure that it reflects feedback from all of our stakeholder groups, while maintaining alignment with the proceeding guiding principles.

Guiding Principles

As the planning team met, a series of principles were defined to use as cornerstones of the school district's learning plan for the 2020-21 school year:

1. Maintain the health and safety of all students and staff;
2. Provide meaningful and engaging academic experiences for all students;
3. Address the social and emotional needs of all students;
4. Provide consistency and stability for all students and staff; and
5. Provide continuous professional learning opportunities for staff that address learning needs unique to this time.

Health and Safety Guidance

State departments of education and local school districts across the country have started to discuss reopening models for fall. An essential element of each of these plans is to ensure that schools are able to decrease the risk of COVID-19 spread through a variety of social distancing techniques. Current guidance from the CDC recommends the following behaviors to reduce the COVID-19 spread⁵:

- Students and staff staying home when appropriate;
- Teaching and reinforcing handwashing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds and increase monitoring to ensure adherence among students and staff;
- Face coverings should be worn by staff and students (particularly older students) as feasible, and are most essential when physical distancing is difficult;
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces, and either limit the use of shared objects, or clean shared objects between use;
- Space seating/desks at least 6 feet apart when feasible. Turn desks to face in the same direction (rather than facing each other), or have students sit on only one side of tables, spaced apart;
- Create distance between children on school buses (e.g., seat children on child per row, skip rows) when possible;
- Install physical barriers, such as sneeze guards and partitions, particularly in areas where it is difficult for individuals to remain at least 6 feet apart (e.g., reception desks),
- Provide physical guides, such as tape on floors or sidewalks and signs on walls, to ensure that staff and children remain at least 6 feet apart in lines and at other times (e.g., guides for creating “one way routes” in hallways);
- Close communal use shared spaces, and add physical barriers between bathroom sinks especially when they cannot be at least 6 feet apart;
- Have children bring their own meals as feasible, or serve individually plated meals in classrooms instead of in a communal dining hall or cafeteria;
- Offer options for staff at higher risk of severe illness (including older adults and people of all ages with certain underlying medical conditions) that limit their exposure risk (e.g., telework, modified job responsibilities that limit exposure risk);
- Offer options for students at higher risk of severe illness that limit their exposure risk (e.g., virtual learning opportunities);
- Consistent with applicable law, put in place policies to protect the privacy of people at higher risk for severe illness regarding underlying medical conditions;
- Pursue virtual group events, gatherings, or meetings, if possible, and promote social distancing of at least 6 feet between people if events are held. Limit group size to the extent possible;
- Limit any non-essential visitors, volunteers, and activities involving external groups or organizations as possible;
- Ensure that student and staff groupings are as static as possible by having the same group of children stay with the same staff (all day for young children, and as much as possible for older children);
- Stagger arrival and drop-off times or locations by cohort or put in place other protocols to limit contact between cohorts and direct contact with parents as much as possible;

⁵ [Considerations for Schools: Promoting Behaviors that Reduce Spread](#) (May 19, 2020).

- When possible, use flexible worksites (e.g., telework) and flexible work hours (e.g., staggered shifts) to help establish policies and practices for social distancing (maintaining distance of approximately 6 feet) between employees and others, especially if social distancing is recommended by state and local health authorities;
- Implement flexible sick leave policies and practices that enable staff to stay home when they are sick, have been exposed, or caring for someone who is sick;
- Monitor absenteeism of students and employees, cross-train staff, and create a roster of trained back-up staff; and
- Train staff on all safety protocols and conduct training virtually or ensure that social distancing is maintained during training.

In addition to the logistical guidance offered by the CDC, the Illinois State Board of Education, Illinois Department of Public Health, and the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity have published documents that reinforce and clarify guidance for Illinois schools. This statewide guidance is in alignment with the five phases of Restore Illinois⁶, with an emphasis that local school boards will ultimately be responsible for developing a plan that is appropriate for their community and within the guidelines offered by local health officials.

⁶ [Restore Illinois: A Public Health Approach to Safely Reopen Our State](#) (May 5, 2020).

Draft Learning Plan for the 2020-21 School Year

Prior to presenting the draft learning plan for the 2020-21 school year, it is important to emphasize that this is a draft document.

The plan is grounded in the assumption that students will be required to maintain the Restore Illinois Phase 4 guidelines including, social distancing, face masks, and groupings smaller than 50.

This plan will continue to evolve based on the most recent public health information, guidance from the Illinois State Board of Education, feedback from stakeholder groups, and our guiding principles.

It is estimated that the northeast health region, which includes Glenview and Northbrook, will transition to phase 4 (revitalization) by August. During this phase, gatherings of up to 50 people are allowed, and schools can reopen under guidance from the Illinois Department of Public Health. At this time, very minimal guidance has been offered. It is further estimated that a region will transition to phase 5 after a vaccine or highly effective treatment becomes widely available. Until that time, face coverings and social distancing will remain the norm. Progressing to the next phase will be guided by [metric data tracing](#). With this knowledge, we reviewed the health and safety guidance previously presented and considered different learning plan models for the start of the 20-21 school year.

Proposed Model: Enriched E-Learning with Gradual Return

As shared earlier, we identified a series of principles to use as cornerstones of our plan:

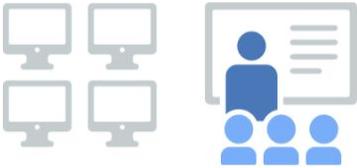
1. Maintain the health and safety of all students and staff;
2. Provide meaningful and engaging academic experiences for all students;
3. Address the social and emotional needs of all students;
4. Provide consistency and stability for all students and staff; and
5. Provide continuous professional learning opportunities for staff that address learning needs unique to this time.

From an instructional perspective, we believe that providing a consistent and stable learning environment is a critical element for student success. And while we are all yearning for a return to normalcy, we acknowledge that essential health and safety measures present barriers in restoring what we know as normal. Given these barriers:

1. We believe that the next best thing from being with our students on a daily basis in the classroom, is to provide a consistent e-learning experience that mirrors as much of a normal school day as possible, until we are able to return; and
2. We acknowledge that there are times when our students need access to face-to-face interactions and services within the school building.

Taking these elements into consideration, we have developed a unique learning experience that we have termed enriched e-learning with a gradual return model. This model provides a consistent, predictable experience for both our students and instructional staff. It also provides the greatest stability should the region need to transition to an earlier phase. If we were to bring large groups of students back at the start of the year, it is very likely we would have to suspend face-to-face instruction for a period of time upon learning of a COVID-19 case. By starting in a mode of e-learning, we will be able to validate our e-learning parameters and experience, enabling students and teachers to more effectively transition between e-learning and face-to-face learning as necessary.

Table 1
Enriched E-Learning with a Gradual Return Model

Phase 4 (Revitalization)		Phase 5 (Restored)
All Students Participating in E-Learning	Enriched E-Learning Supports Available In-School As Needed	All Students Return
		

As suggested in the header, the Enriched E-Learning Gradual Return Model is aligned to the phases presented within the Restore Illinois framework. Grounded in a consistent mode of delivery, this model seeks to provide stability for students while learning from home, with access to on-site services at the school building. Examples of these on-site services include:

Freshman Students

- A freshman experience event would be offered to students prior to the first day of school. This would be scheduled across multiple days in order to accommodate small groups of students in the building at one time.

All Students

- Students begin the fall semester with e-learning on Wednesday, August 19, 2020.
- E-Learning will include required synchronous sessions and regular attendance and grading practices. Throughout phase 4, e-learning will remain the backbone of our instructional delivery model.
- After Labor Day (4 instructional days for A(Gold) and B(Blue) classes), face-to-face services will be offered to all students by appointment. Examples of these services include:
 - Academic support;
 - Counseling;
 - Case management; and
 - Related service, as needed.
- A slow and steady return of students or groups of students allows us to safely scale up our operations to meet students' needs. Continuous evaluation of public health information will be used to determine the rate and type of scaling up.
- All students will participate in a Tier 1 curriculum designed to address the social/emotional needs of students.
 - The Tier 1 curriculum will include components that serve as a screener for students who need Tier 2 and 3 interventions and supports.
 - This is a critical component of the plan as it ensures that students feel safe and ready to learn.

All Staff

- Staff will continually have access to school buildings to access learning materials, teacher workrooms, and offices. They will also have the ability to record instructional lessons, receive technology support, meet with small groups of students by appointment, and meet with course teams or instructional coaches.

- Non-instructional staff members whose positions allow for remote working will continue to work from home, remaining on call and locally available. Staff members whose positions do not allow for remote working will work their daily schedule, with modifications to ensure social distancing guidelines are followed.

Next Steps

As we continue to develop the best learning model for our students, the following represent a few of the questions that we are processing on an ongoing basis:

Operational

- How does any new guidance for school reopening issued by the Illinois State Board of Education, the Illinois Department of Public Health, or the Cook County Department of Public Health impact our current plan?
- When considering our guiding principles, does the current plan meet the needs and expectations of our local school community, including our students, parents, and staff?
- In what ways can we continue on the path to opening our schools?
 - What services can be provided within the school building each school day that would be in alignment with current health guidance?
 - What reasonable accommodations can be made to safely open our schools, and what resources would be required?
 - What modifications to school entry procedures need to be made (e.g., temperature checks, student and staff check-in)?
 - What requirements will be established for all students and staff (e.g., wearing masks)? How will these be enforced?
 - How will we manage the challenge of some students or staff members that are unable to return to the building for medical reasons?

Academics, Activities, Athletics, and the Arts

- How will we ensure an academic environment in which all students can succeed while maintaining academic integrity?
- How will we address “learning loss”, or potential knowledge gaps from the previous grade level?
- How will we address the social and emotional needs of students and staff as a new school year begins?
- Will it be possible to provide athletic and extracurricular opportunities this fall? How will we ensure that these activities are both safe and meaningful?

E-Learning

- How will we ensure all students have equal access and opportunity to participate in e-learning?
- What is the ideal e-learning schedule that will balance synchronous sessions, asynchronous sessions, and time for academic support and other services?
 - What is an ideal schedule?
 - How long will synchronous sessions be?
- In a traditional environment, students attend a 90 minute class session in a face-to-face environment, and then have homework to complete outside of class. What guidelines would apply to an e-learning environment?