



## **Virtual Learning Frequently Asked Questions**

**July 2020**

*Don't see your question answered? Refer to the Virtual School Guidelines on the Madison County Schools website or e-mail [Virtuallearning@madison-schools.com](mailto:Virtuallearning@madison-schools.com). Also, this is a fluid document based on current information and will be adjusted due to additional student/parent questions and new guidance from education, government and/or health officials.*

### **What will the typical virtual learning school day be like? Will my child's schedule be the same as if they were on campus?**

Virtual learning cannot fully replicate the experience of face-to-face teaching and learning, but virtual learning is designed to provide students with the content to meet the same state standards as on-campus learning. While virtual learning classes will not be a live stream or recording of on-campus classes at your child's school due to privacy concerns, the curriculum will include instruction overseen by a licensed teacher and provided through a variety of possible means which may include video lessons. Students involved in virtual learning will be in classes separate from on-campus learners. MCS instructional staff will be available to assist virtual learning students with weekly independent assignments posted in an online Learning Management System such as Canvas or Edgenuity. Student interaction with teachers could occur through a platform such as Microsoft Teams, which operates like Zoom. There may be scheduled times when your child will have to be online participating with the virtual class. There may be assignments that your child can work on at any time, as long as they are completed by an assigned deadline. Please understand that due to the wide variety of courses and subject matter across the K-12 curriculum, courses and classes will not follow the same recipe for instruction. The models of instruction in the virtual curriculum will vary by subject matter and grade level so that instruction may be provided in a developmentally appropriate way.

### **How much time will a student be expected to spend on schoolwork? Will the schedule/routine be the same every day?**

Mississippi Department of Education guidelines call for 4 hours of daily instruction/learning for a total of 20 hours per week. However, the actual amount of time a student will spend on schoolwork each day may vary somewhat based on the student's work/study habits and time management skills. There will be ample time for breaks, lunch and physical activities to be built into the schedule.

**For grades 6-12, will all courses offered on-campus be offered in virtual learning?**

The first priority of virtual learning is to provide fulfillment of core course requirements for students in each grade level. Virtual learning course offerings will be determined based on the number of students who enroll, their choice sheets that were completed in the spring, whether or not a class minimum is met for some courses, and the availability of instructional staff for specific courses. Therefore, we cannot identify which specific courses will be available until after the closure of the enrollment process on August 14.

**Will students enrolled in virtual learning first semester who transition to on-campus learning second semester be able to participate in extracurricular activities beginning in January 2021?**

Students who are enrolled in on-campus learning may participate in extracurricular activities. A student who transitions to on-campus learning will be able to participate in extracurricular activities during the semester in which they are learning on campus. As always, some activities will require tryouts/auditions for participation. First semester virtual learners who plan to transition to on-campus learning should plan to participate in tryouts/auditions for second semester activities. Please note those tryouts/auditions may occur during first semester and may require an in-person visit to campus. Students who were already scheduled for activities based on a successful tryout/audition for first semester will be able to participate in those activities upon on-campus return in January.

**Will instructional supports such as textbooks and printed worksheets as well as technological devices be provided to students enrolled in virtual learning?**

Technological devices such as iPads (K-1), Chromebooks (2-8) and MacBooks (9-12) will be available to each student enrolled in virtual learning; a usage fee exists for K-8 (\$25) and for 9-12 (\$50). The MCS Technology Department will gladly assist with any technology challenges with MCS issued devices. Also, schools will provide necessary materials for coursework depending on the grade level and nature of the course in which the student is enrolled.

**Will students involved in virtual learning have to attend the school site to complete their assessments?**

From time to time, students enrolled in virtual learning may be required to be in person for school and state testing or other activities designated by the school or District leadership. Safety precautions will be in place, such as limiting the number of students in a room, in order to social distance. Safety protocols outlined in the District and school level reentry guidelines will be followed during the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Will students who begin the school year on campus have the opportunity to transition to the virtual option?**

Yes, a transition to virtual learning will be possible, although for the sake of course scheduling we strongly encourage families to adhere to the initial August 14 enrollment deadline. There is no guarantee that a student's courses from on-campus enrollment will be available through virtual learning. Once a student transitions to virtual learning, he or she will be enrolled in the virtual program for the remainder of the semester. Virtual students will be allowed to transition to on-campus learning only between semesters.

**How will my child's special education services be provided through virtual learning?**

An IEP meeting will be held to discuss your child's specific needs.

**How do parents know if their student(s) has been accepted for virtual learning?**

Enrollment in virtual learning has occurred as long as you received a successful submission message upon completion of the online virtual learning enrollment form. Families who experience difficulties with this process can e-mail [virtuallearning@madison-schools.com](mailto:virtuallearning@madison-schools.com).

**What are next steps for families who applied for virtual learning enrollment?**

Technological device distribution is occurring at schools across the district according to schedules posted on school websites. Each student enrolled in virtual learning should acquire their iPad (K-1), Chromebook (2-8) or MacBook (9-12) at their home school just like on-campus learners. Once the virtual learning enrollment window closes on August 14, Madison County Schools personnel will be in touch with families concerning next steps for the opening of on-campus school as well as virtual learning on September 3.

**What is the difference between virtual learning and homeschooling?**

Virtual learning is available to students whose families meet residency requirements and have first registered their child(ren) at the Madison County Schools' campus for which they are zoned. Students enrolled in MCS virtual learning will be instructed by MCS teachers who will utilize district instructional materials and assessments. Virtual learning is not the same thing as homeschool. Families who choose to homeschool their children are not enrolled as part of a school or district, and parents are responsible for curriculum and instruction. Families wishing to take part in MCS virtual school should first enroll their child at the appropriate school campus then go online to complete the virtual school enrollment process.