

Kalamazoo Public Schools Continuity of Learning Plan Summary Report

Summary KPS Continuity of Learning Plan

Kalamazoo Public Schools (KPS) developed a COVID-19 Continuity of Learning Plan (COLP) based on Governor Whitmer's Executive Order 35 in order for student learning to continue. The plan was developed with multiple stakeholders' input within a relatively short period of time. Students received learning opportunities on the KPS website as well as food distribution sites started right away on March 16, 2020. Learning packets were distributed three days a week at the 24 food sites starting the same week. The plan left open flexibility for adjustments and supports as needed.

(1) Describe the Alternative Modes of Instruction

a. Learning Hub

Within two days of shutting down school due to the COVID-19 pandemic, KPS created a Google website called "The Learning Hub" for families and students to access support materials. These materials consisted of academics, remediation websites, social-emotional supports, and community resources. A helpdesk via the website was provided for students and families. In addition, weekly lessons and standards were provided to students. The Learning Hub had 17,825 users between March 16 and June 15. Over 34,000 sessions were held on the Hub with 79,070 pageviews. The users included 54.8% on a desktop; 40.5% on a mobile device; and 4.7% on a tablet. Most users were online on Mondays and Tuesdays between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m.; with the least usage on Thursdays and Fridays.

b. Knowledge Center

Within one week of shutting down school due to COVID-19, KKPS created a Google website called "The Knowledge Center" for educators to access support materials. These materials consisted of academic guides, social-emotional supports for self, students and families, and community resources to share. In addition, the online resources and programs utilized for instruction each had their own subpage created to support teachers in review and asynchronous learning of these. The Google Educational Suite, Google Meet, Kami, Screencastify, Google Classroom, and many more apps/sites were supported. A synchronous PD calendar was also embedded on The Knowledge Center which allowed teachers to continue learning throughout the COLP. The Knowledge Center was used by 2,147 staff members. This included teachers (800), behavioral specialists, paraprofessionals, and other staff members. There were 19,973 pageviews. The users included 85.8% on a desktop; 12.7% on a mobile device; and 1.5% on a tablet. Most users were online on Tuesdays between 8:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m. The other days were evenly distributed between 7:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.; although the 8:00 p.m. hour was also popular in usage.

c. Distance Learning Plans for Students with Disabilities

Based on the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) Guidance from the Governors' closure and the United States Office of Special Education, the special education department provided professional development for all special education instructors, ancillary staff and teachers (by choice) on the plan to support students with disabilities during the closure. In collaboration with our legal counsel, we developed Distance Learning Plans for all students in KPS who had IEPs and 504 Plans. All parents/guardians received a letter detailing the Distance Learning Plans and the support all staff would provide for students during our district's COV-19 closure in the spring of 2020.

Staff were required to keep a log of all instructional supports and virtual or phone contacts with all students on their caseload. Staff also co-taught virtually with general education teachers to minimize students' time on virtual learning and to make the engagement more meaningful. Chromebooks were distributed to all students who made requests and special education paraprofessionals assisted in dropping them off at homes as well as paper learning packets and food. All special education paraprofessionals were expected to make contact with students with their caseload teachers, or any students assigned to them by their building principal that needed outreach. All Distance Learning Plans and logs were housed in Google and a summary of interactions were completed at the end of the school year. All students received their second semester progress reports and Distance Learning Summaries that were included with the general education teachers' summaries.

(2) Describe the Methods Used to Keep Students at the Center

a. Chromebook Distribution

Beginning in March, KPS staff began planning for the distribution of Chromebooks to any and all KPS students who indicated that they needed them. Through KPS and a partnership with a local business, donated Chromebook devices were given to high school students who needed access to computer resources to continue learning from home. Following the initial distribution, Chromebooks were pulled from classroom carts in all buildings in order to loan devices to all PreK-12 students who needed them. By the time the continuity of learning plan was fully implemented, more than 7,500 Chromebooks had been distributed to KPS Students.

Chromebooks were distributed to students with disabilities as well during the initial distribution with the support of paraprofessionals and other staff. All special education paraprofessionals were trained on virtual access to be able to assist teachers and students with instruction. Paraprofessionals received Chromebooks so that they could connect with our students.

b. Committee Working on Internet Access

Shortly after the school closure was announced, survey data was collected to determine the number of students who lacked access to reliable, high-speed Internet. Teachers asked their students on an individual basis about their access to the Internet to get the highest return rate of responses as possible. Initial results suggested that approximately 30% of KPS students lacked access to this important resource.

In response, a cohort of community partners including the City of Kalamazoo, Kalamazoo Promise, Kalamazoo Community Foundation, Kalamazoo Public Library, Kalamazoo Public Schools, Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo Youth Development Network (KydNet) and Kalamazoo Regional Educational Service Agency was convened, called Digital Access For All (DAFA). DAFA worked collaboratively to develop a Request for Proposals, secure funding, and procure 1000 hotspot devices in order to begin the work of bridging the digital divide for the students of Kalamazoo Public schools.

Beyond the initial deployment of 1,000 hotspot devices, DAFA is committed to continuing the work of eliminating the digital divide within the Kalamazoo Community through seeking long-term solutions like creating a community-wide mesh network, thereby ensuring that all residents of the City of Kalamazoo have access to the internet, regardless of where they reside within the community.

c. Student focused supports for students with disabilities

The support for students with disabilities included not only Distance Learning Plans individualized for each student, but also support staff were extremely focused on SEL lessons and needs of students preK-12. There were peer-to-peer chats, social skills meetings and check-in sessions with school social workers, clinical social workers and support staff. The social workers also created a Google Classroom accessible site that provided SEL lessons, community contacts and other resources for students, teachers and families. In addition, referrals for counseling and mental health assessments were made for students and families as well as food and other essential items delivered to homes of families who expressed difficulties getting out in the community due to the physical health of their students.

(3) Describe the Ways Content Was Delivered for Learning

a. Online Learning

Remote, student-focused lessons were developed in conjunction with grade level and content experts for preK-8 grade students and were hosted on The Learning Hub and The Knowledge Center via a shared spreadsheet. Teachers met a minimum of 3 times a week with their caseload of students for formal/synchronous teaching as well as had open office hours for remediation and

questions twice a week or more. Synchronous lessons were often recorded by educators to be made available offline and/or in an asynchronous manner via Google Classroom and classroom websites.

b. Learning Packets

Learning packets were created which mirrored the standards and lessons being remotely taught weekly. Students were able to take pictures/scan these packets to share with teachers for feedback. Packets were available at the 24 KPS Grab and Go food distribution sites three times a week for the duration of the spring KPS COLP and also were being made available during the summer for review and practice.

(4) Describe the Method of Managing and Monitoring Student Learning

Classroom teachers tracked student participation in virtual meetings with their students. Although no grades were used, feedback was provided by teachers to students through class discussion during online meetings, individual feedback during virtual office hours or by email, and comments or editing suggestions on some of the work students submitted. The feedback loop was challenging when assignments were not consistently completed by some students.

Teachers in the elementary academically talented program provided lessons and feedback on an alternate schedule. Elementary art, music, and physical education teachers provided pre-recorded and live lessons in their areas for all students. These teachers tracked the number of students who participated in weekly or twice-weekly lessons. They also were available to provide feedback or answer questions during office hours or by email.

An elementary Distance Learning Feedback Report was developed to replace the fourth marking period report card that the district would have been using had the district not closed due to COVID-19. Some documentation of student participation as well as level of understanding of grade level standards that were the focus of the distance learning instruction were shared with parents/guardians and placed in the students' permanent cumulative records files. A Pass or Incomplete designation was included on each student's Feedback Report. (The designation of Incomplete was not meant to imply that students would need to complete work later but simply that full participation had not happened for a variety of reasons.)

At the secondary level, students received credit/no credit for their classes. Feedback was more specific during this time period with the elimination of grades. All teachers were encouraged to provide flexibility and patience. Students were encouraged to participate and contribute to lessons weekly.

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All preK - grade 11 students have been moved on to the next grade unless a retention was in place with a family agreement prior to the closing of Michigan schools on March 16, 2020.

Distance Learning Instructional logs for students with disabilities were kept by all special education teachers and staff during the closure to document their involvement with students and families. Each plan and log were kept in a Google drive by building and teacher or service provider.

(5) State the Expenditures

The district has expended approximately \$1.8 million to date on the Continuity of Learning and COVID-19 Response Plan. This included reproducing learning packets, purchasing additional software, and safety protocol items.

(6) Describe the Collaboration to Develop the Plan

Many KPS departments contributed to the development and implementation of the KPS Continuity of Learning Plan including Senior Leadership, Teaching and Learning Services, Student Services, Human Resources, Technology, Facilities Management, Communications, Information Services, Food Services, and Transportation. There was regular two-way communication with the president of the Kalamazoo Education Association (KEA) and uniserv director of the Michigan Education Association. KEA sought input from their members. Teachers were involved in the development of distance learning instruction for their students as they contributed to the development of resources on The Learning Hub (for students) and the The Knowledge Center (for teachers). Principals were involved in leading and supporting their professional and support staff members, making sure all had meaningful work during the COVID-19 district closure. Some principals, teachers, and support staff members also regularly volunteered at the food sites three days a week.

Community organizations were also collaborators including several who worked on the Digital Access for All project (DAFA) described above: City of Kalamazoo, Kalamazoo Foundation, Kalamazoo Promise, Kalamazoo Public Schools, Kalamazoo Public Library, Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo Youth Development Network (KydNet), and the Kalamazoo Regional Educational Support Agency (KRESA). Kalamazoo Communities In Schools and other volunteers from the community provided ongoing support at the food and learning packet distribution sites from mid-March through June 30. Two distributions of Earth Day packets (seeds, information, dirt) were prepared by a collaborative effort with the Kalamazoo Nature

Center, Kalamazoo Earth Day organizers, Kalamazoo Climate Crisis Coalition, Kalamazoo Valley Community College Food Innovation Center, Kalamazoo Valley Museum, and the City of Kalamazoo. Two teachers wrote and received grants for art supplies for distribution to students. Many other organizations and individuals donated items for distribution to families including personal care items, books, personal protection masks and gloves, and school supplies. Loaves and Fishes made emergency food boxes available to families at food sites at community locations (e.g., Eastside Neighborhood Association and New Village Park Apartments). The Interfaith Homes and Fox Ridge Apartments also made it possible for the KPS food sites to be on-site.

The Kalamazoo Department of Health and Community Services provided COVID-19 guidance as the elements of the KPS Continuity of Learning Plan have been implemented. The Michigan Licensing and Regulatory Affairs - Child Care Programs agency worked with KPS to revise the child care license for our child care site at Greenwood Elementary School.

(7) Describe the Method for Notification to Students and Parents of the Plan

The use of the district website, social media, letters home, robocalls and communications from principals and teachers all made families aware of the plan and available resources. Information was provided at least weekly or sooner when needed. There were many resources available on the website and social media sites throughout the time period.

(8) Provide the Implementation Times

Implementation of the KPS COLP began with professional development (PD) for all teachers and instructional support staff the week of April 13, 2020. This required PD included virtual learning. The sessions covered topics such as Social Emotional Learning, pedagogy, education technology tools (Kami, Google Suite, Google Classroom etc.) and grade level specific content. Sessions were often recorded for asynchronous learning/reference to teachers who could not attend. In addition, teachers were encouraged to form groups to share best practices, Google sites, and other resources.

During the week of April 20, 2020, teachers and other professional staff members were expected to hold virtual office hours (two 2 hour time blocks) and provide a minimum of one lesson or other virtual gathering of their students. They were also highly encouraged to continue professional development provided synchronously and asynchronously in the Knowledge Center.

The full COLP instructional plan was implemented during the weeks of April 27 through June 8, 2020. Elementary classroom teachers provided virtual instruction for 30 minutes three times per week (Monday/Wednesday/Friday and their office hours twice a week). Other 30-minute elementary virtual classes were provided in art, music, and physical education for all students on

Tuesdays and Thursdays Many teachers recorded their lessons so they could be viewed at a later time. Assignments were provided to students to work on between class meetings. Assignments were reviewed by teachers to inform instruction and to enable them to provide feedback to students. Additional instructional support was provided on Tuesdays and Thursdays as well for academically talented students, ESL students, students with IEPs, and small group interventions in reading and/or mathematics. The middle school teachers provided synchronous virtual lessons two times a week with assignments provided as above. Additional lessons to be completed asynchronously were stored in the Google Classrooms. The schedule was developed according to each class period taught. Office hours were kept as above. High school teachers developed their own teaching schedule with a minimum of twice a week synchronous virtual classes delivered, assignments given, and office hours kept.

Principals at all levels provided support and monitored implementation of the KPS COLP. A weekly virtual staff meeting was held by each staff. Teachers tracked the students that engaged in distance learning at least once a week (Google Classroom meeting, office hours, other including two-way e-mail).

Professional development opportunities were available every week through June 5 in the Knowledge Center. Sessions included regular presentations by the district's culture and climate coaches, district-wide office hours by the culture and climate coaches, and a variety of instructional and technology-related sessions provided by members of the Teaching and Learning Services administrator and academic coaching staff members. Sometimes a webinar provided by an external source was also noted and made available.

(9) Describe the Post Secondary, Career and Technology Education (CTE) Supports

Students enrolled in dual enrollment courses at Western Michigan University (WMU) or Kalamazoo Valley Community College (KVCC) were able to finish their courses virtually as deemed appropriate by those institutions. Students were approximately six weeks from the end of the semester at the time that schools were closed. By the time the COLP was fully put in place, students had finished the semester. The same holds true for students enrolled in Early/Middle College (E/MC) with Kalamazoo Regional Educational Service Agency (KRESA).

High school students enrolled in CTE courses were able to continue courses. Students take CTE courses in a county-wide program offered via KRESA. The CTE programs included Education for Employment (EFE) and Education for the Arts (EFA). KRESA met virtually with the high school principals in the county to develop common expectations as students are able to take EFE courses with students in other districts.

(10) Describe the Food Distribution

Grab and go breakfast and lunch meals for multiple days were prepared in four kitchen sites. Buses and vans came to pick up the meal packs and delivered to twenty school sites and four community sites Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Meal packs were served out of the vehicle in a drive by or walk up method. Food Service staff, activity helpers, campus safety, administrators, other district staff and volunteers all assisted in the process. 864,762 total meals were handed out during the school closure period of March 16 - June 30, 2020. Learning packets, books, and other resources were made available to people at the food sites with volunteers as described above responsible for distribution of these items.

(11) Describe that School Employees Were Paid

The district continued to pay school employees during the balance of the 2019-2020 school year under the same terms and conditions established prior to the school closure order period.

(12) Describe the Evaluation and Participation of Pupils in the Plan

a. Data from PD Sessions

Professional development for staff was both asynchronous and synchronous within five days of our closure. "The Knowledge Center" was a Google site created by the Teaching and Learning Services staff in support of educators who had originally volunteered to support children before there was union agreement for all teachers to implement distance learning instruction. Asynchronous professional development pages were created for technology tools, social emotional supports, Google Classrooms of lesson tools/templates and more. As the COLP began to take shape formal synchronous professional development was offered. Over 150 professional development sessions were offered to staff between April 15-June 5. There was much, mostly voluntary, participation in professional development by KPS teachers and support staff.

All special education staff were provided professional development on the Distance Learning Plan development, Distance Learning Instructional Logs and all forms of edtech tools.

b. Survey Summaries for Each Area (Staff, Students, Families, Community)

KPS staff collected feedback on the KPS COLP from stakeholder groups during May and June of 2020. The methods of obtaining feedback included a principal survey and group discussions during principal meetings, an electronic teacher survey, parent focus groups and phone interviews, and an electronic survey for students in grades 3-12. In each case, the questions asked surrounded three main areas of: (1) What went well?; (2) What didn't go well?; and (3) What needs to be considered for the fall?.

Twenty eight principals completed a survey and participated in group discussions regarding the execution of the COLP. Survey results indicate that nearly all teachers, secretaries,

paraprofessionals and other full-time staff were engaged in meaningful work. Barriers to engagement to meaningful work, primarily among part-time staff, was hindered most frequently by knowledge or skill gaps.

Principals also reported that although many aspects of the COLP went well, some families were not ever reached, despite exhaustive attempts at contact. Among families that did participate, principals reported that families often felt overwhelmed by the schedule and workload. This finding was further exacerbated by a lack of clear expectations and accountability for what students were being asked to do.

A total of 457 teachers participated in the teacher COLP survey. Teachers reported that the most significant barrier to student engagement was lack of parent/family support for some students. Teachers also reported that initial communication gaps and lack of participation in planning contributed to a lack of understanding around expectations and accountability. Teachers reported that training sessions held were informative and comprehensive.

As the COLP was implemented, teachers found that many of their students were eager to connect to share their thoughts and feelings with teachers.

Parents from every school building were randomly selected to participate in focus groups to provide feedback on the district COLP. Feedback from parents was overwhelmingly positive, given recognition to the complexity of the circumstances surrounding the execution of the district COLP. Parents reported that they appreciated consistent platforms like Google Classrooms and that they were impressed with how quickly their students adapted to online learning.

Parents also expressed several concerns regarding things that didn't go well during the implementation of the district COLP. Many parents reported difficulty balancing personal and school workloads, and often felt overwhelmed. Access to reliable home internet and devices was also a challenge, especially in homes with multiple students. Parents reported that expectations across classrooms were often inconsistent, which resulted in communication gaps and lack of consistent feedback on learning.

Parents have a wide range of concerns to consider for fall, many of which are unique to individual sets of family circumstances.

A total of 2,974 students in grades 3-12 participated in the student COLP survey. Students responded to likert-scale items on a variety of items related to their personal experience with online learning. Students indicated that they had the greatest difficulty with completing work

and using online programs. Students indicated that the workload was hard to manage and that it was often difficult to focus on online learning due, in part, to additional responsibilities at home.

c. Participation Data

As the COLP began we made a conscious effort to maintain contact with as many students as possible. We recognized that connecting with school would help students and families maintain some sense of normalcy during a difficult time. To that end, we decided to track two-way communications between school and home on a weekly basis as our primary participation metric.

Participation varied widely over the course of the implementation of the COLP. It varied week by week, school by school, and teacher by teacher. In the first three weeks of implementation, 100% of our elementary schools had over 70% participation, as logged by teachers. Over the same time period, 75% of our secondary schools had at least 50% participation, as logged by teachers.

During the middle two weeks of the COLP period, 82% of elementary schools maintained at least 70% student participation, as logged by teachers. Over the same time period, 38% of our secondary schools had at least 50% participation, as logged by teachers.

Finally, over the past three weeks of the COLP period, 12% of elementary schools maintained at least 70% student participation and 65% of elementary schools reported at least 50% student participation, as logged by teachers. At the secondary level, 13% of schools reported at least 50% student participation, as logged by teachers.

At the high school level, the following items were recommended to the KPS Board of Education:

1. Adjusted the credits to graduate from Kalamazoo Central (KC) High School and Loy Norrix (LN) High School from 26 to 23.5 and adjusted the credits to graduate from Kalamazoo Innovative Learning Program (KILP) and Phoenix from 19 to 18.
2. Altered the one credit of government requirement to 0.5 credit for KC and LN students.
3. Expanded the four credits of English Language Arts (ELA) to include ELA elective courses such as Drama, Advanced Drama, African-American Literature, Creative Writing, Debate, Journalism, Literature Through Films, Novels of Choice, Public Speaking, and Yearbook.

In the comprehensive high schools, when combining all students with all grades, there was a 9% and 16% decline in the pass rate when compared to the previous two school years. At our alternative high school, when combining all the students with all grades, there was no decline. The students' GPAs were not impacted because all students earned either a CR for credit or an NC for no credit. The number of high school seniors graduating in the class of 2020 has

approached nearly 700 students which aligns closely with previous graduating classes. The district offered a virtual summer school for high school students with over 200 students enrolled.

(13) Describe the Mental Health Supports

Behavior specialists and other student support service providers met with students via Google Meet or by telephone. There were SEL check-in sessions for students to share with staff their concerns or feelings during the time away from school. Base Education, a module based social emotional learning tool, was also used with students on an as-needed basis. The behavior support team assigned specific SEL modules to students from this program. The students responded to the direct questions in the module in writing and the staff monitored responses to drive their discussions with students.

Social emotional lessons were printed as hard copies and provided for students on a weekly basis. These lessons focused on the CASEL competencies. Parents could find these lessons on the Learning Hub housed on our website, or pick up a physical copy from the food distribution locations weekly.

The district maintains strong relationships with our Community Mental Health Organization; Integrated Services of Kalamazoo as well as with Gryphon Place, a local dispute resolution and suicide prevention agency. These organizations along with Communities In Schools - Kalamazoo provided additional support for our students and families during this time. Teletherapy and crisis intervention took place on an as needed basis.

The district monitored “fire words” in the district provided email that students have. Whenever students sent an email with any concerning phrases or words, the system would alert our Student Services Department and an administrator and parent would be contacted immediately. This is an on-going measure of intervention we have in place.

(14) Describe the Child Care Center Supports

Two Disaster Relief Child Care Centers (DRCC) for children of Kalamazoo Public Schools’ essential workers were opened on April 27, 2020: one located at the regular child care center at Loy Norrix High School (for infants through pre-kindergarten ages) and one located at Greenwood Elementary School (for elementary school-age children). The times of operation were 7:30 am - 4:00 pm. There was no charge for KPS essential employees’ children to attend. All COVID-19 safety protocols were followed including training, drop off rules, temperature checks, masks, gloves, and handwashing.

KPS essential employees were informed about the child care centers through an internal weekly publication and communication from supervisors and principals. The process of registering for the program included employee contact with the KPS GSRP/PEEP office, completion of the Child Information Record form (used in licensed child care facilities), and confirmation that the children's immunizations were up-to-date. Due to limited use of the child care centers, both were closed on May 22, 2020.

(15) Describe Calendar Changes

The district changed the schedule of two schools who were on a balanced calendar to the regular school calendar with the rest of the district for 2020-2021. Washington Writers' Academy and Woodward School for Technology and Research had been on a balanced calendar for the last two years expecting to start school on July 20, 2020. With little guidance and many unknowns, the district decided to move the two schools to start at the end of August along with the rest of the district so more information could be communicated to staff and families prior to starting school.

The district has contractual agreements with staff members for calendar dates. No other changes to the calendar were made in the KPS COLP.