Montessori Fall 2020 FAQ

This document is designed to respond to questions elevated by Montessori teachers, families and the community. Where appropriate we encourage readers to review responses in the District’s reopening plan and have written responses to Montessori specific questions.

District FAQ

SAFETY AND CLEANING

- What happens if a teacher must quarantine? Will a class quarantine if a student tests positive?

The District will follow CDC guidance on what to do when students and staff exhibit symptoms and when a case is suspected/confirmed. Students or staff who exhibit symptoms will be directed home to self-isolate and seek medical attention, as necessary. Positive or suspected cases will be confirmed with the local Department of Public Health who will assist with developing recommended next steps based on the level of potential exposure. Staff and families will be notified if they or a student has been in “close contact” with a confirmed case and will be directed to self-isolate and monitor themselves for potential symptoms. This may result in the temporary closure of school buildings or offices. At a minimum, in the event of confirmed case, the District may close off portions of/an entire office or building for a period of 24 hours and allow for additional cleaning/disinfecting before reopening. Before returning to work in person, anyone who has tested positive for COVID-19 must wait at least 72 hours since symptoms ceased (resolution of fever and improvement in respiratory symptoms) AND 10 days since symptoms first appeared. They must also be re-tested and indicate a negative result before returning. Should a school need to close temporarily, all coursework will be completed virtually through the District’s LMS (Learning Management System) and teachers will be expected to continue instruction with students in a virtual format. (DPSCD Re-Opening Plan page 18)

The District is procuring Swivl cameras for all core teachers, which will give them the ability to live stream or record lessons for students who may be participating in a lesson in another location. Some students, either due to illness or other extenuating circumstances, may not be able to come physically to school and will benefit from access to virtual instruction, which may be asynchronous or synchronous. Additionally, the District will be partnering with Schoology to have online course structures that will allow students to engage in instruction, content, and assignments virtually. (DPSCD Re-Opening Plan page 24)

- How will social distancing be maintained with classes of 18 or 25?

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Principals will use a combination of virtual learning and flexible learning space to limit the number of students in one physical room to 20 or less at one time. This may mean smaller groups are in other locations like cafeterias or auditoriums with support staff or other professionals in the building. *(DPSCD Re-Opening Plan page 23)*

- **Will masks be required for students?**

  While the DPSCD Re-Opening plan initially indicated Pre-kindergarten and kindergarten students will not be required to wear masks in accordance with the MI Safe Schools Roadmap it has been updated to indicate that all face to face students will be wearing masks All classes will practice social distancing as recommended by the CDC. Each day, teachers will review distancing and cleanliness protocols that support the safety of all. It will be imperative for adults to talk with young people about why certain actions are being taken and to do so in a manner that expresses care and concern, rather than fear. The District will monitor all updates to guidance on this topic and adjust as appropriate. *(DPSCD Re-Opening Plan page 24)*

- **What checks and balances are in place to ensure sufficient cleaning occurs on a regular basis?**

  Beginning in phase 3 as staff and students return to buildings, custodial crews will clean classrooms and office areas nightly, focusing on disinfecting high-touch surfaces. Custodial staff will conduct regular walk-throughs with supervisors to identify areas that require additional cleaning and after each room/area is disinfected, custodial staff will be required to complete a visible “cleaning checklist” clearly indicating the space has been thoroughly disinfected.

  It is expected that District guidelines around reopening are followed consistently at all locations. Non-adherence to the guidelines in the plan by employees may lead to disciplinary action. Non-adherence to the guidelines by students will be addressed at the school level. A hotline and email address have been established to ensure individuals can report safety issues. These issues will be followed up on regularly by the administration and regular reports will be shared with the Board. Questions specifically related to operations (including necessary supplies or restocking soap in bathrooms) can be reported at 313-578-7018. General questions or concerns related to reopening can be shared via email at info.reopen@detroitk12.org.

  **Checks and Balances:**
  - Regular site walk-throughs
  - Student surveys
  - Staff surveys
  - Family surveys
  - Focus groups

  *(DPSCD Re-Opening Plan page 11, 20 and 22)*
• What cleaning is classroom staff required to do and what cleaning is custodial staff required to do? How will sanitation of materials be managed? Please provide specific details.

Classroom staff will sanitize instructional materials throughout the day between use and will be responsible for ensuring classroom surfaces are cleaned throughout the day. Custodial staff will be responsible for daily deep cleaning and sanitizing of the classroom. Principals will be responsible for ensuring that cleaning throughout the day does take place.

The District and Montessori teachers will be working together to create individual student kits for face to face and virtual students. These kits along with virtual instructional materials will drastically reduce the amount of cleaning that must take place throughout the day, so that teachers can focus on instruction. Once a manipulative is used by a student it will be sanitized before being given to another student for use.

Curriculum and Classes

• What will the virtual daily schedule look like?

The District will produce a sample schedule that principals and teachers will work together to implement at their individual schools. The schedule will outline blocks of time and principals and teachers will determine how the day unfolds. Flexibility will be given so that principals and teachers are able to meet the unique needs of their learning communities. There will be a minimal requirement for student contact and engagement time.

• Will personal kits be available to both in person and virtual students to ensure students are not mixing materials?

The District is working with our partners at Guidepost Montessori and our guides to assemble take home kits for all students. The initial kits will include resources and materials that will be leveraged during the first quarter of the school year. Throughout the year additional materials will be provided as appropriate.

• How will you maintain the Montessori model with virtual learning and face to face social distancing?

Each Principal will work with teachers to lay out their specific virtual learning and face to face social distancing plan. Many of our Montessori classrooms are the largest in the District and will allow for proper social distancing in face to face learning. Furthermore, Montessori classrooms have three adults to help ensure students stay socially distant. Principals and teachers will also
form small groups in separate locations to ensure small class sizes and proper social distancing when necessary. Also, the District has procured Guidepost Montessori’s Virtual Montessori Instructional Materials for all students. That means that in face to face settings guides, assistants and students can access these materials to reduce the number of shared resources needed for Montessori instruction.

- **How will you address the whole child with virtual learning? (specials, Social emotional etc.)**

We know that after this prolonged closure, many of our students and staff will require social-emotional support to help them reengage and reenter work and school. School counselors and administrators will be equipped with tools and information on how to support students and maintain our whole child commitment. To ensure the well-being of our children, it is also imperative to ensure the well-being of their teachers and caregivers, and to provide them with the emotional and administrative supports necessary during this time of re-integration, and in the months ahead. As essential workers in the COVID-19 pandemic, we understand our staff may have worries about their own physical or psychological health, and the potential risk to their family members at home. Because young children internalize the stress of the adults who care for them, we know it is vitally important to provide supports and services to ensure the emotional well-being of our staff.

Those supports will include resources from an organization already widely used in DPSCD known as TRAILS. **Transforming Research into Action to Improve the Lives of Students or TRAILS,** coaches education professionals in cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) and mindfulness practices that help reduce stress and depression in children. We will make the following resources available for staff and families to support children: Crisis Parent and Caregiver Guide, from the Michigan Children’s Trust Fund, Talking with Children about COVID-19, from the CDC, Helping Young Children Through COVID-19, from Zero to Thrive (includes Arabic and Spanish translations) Georgie and the Giant Germ, from Zero to Thrive and Tender Press Books, Wearing a Mask to School.

Teacher’s will utilize virtual tools and discussion protocols to encourage interaction between students during live facilitation. This will support peer to peer interaction and help to reduce a feeling of isolation for students. In a face to face environment, students will be permitted and encouraged to interact with one another while maintaining social distancing.

- **What will specials/elective classes and recess look like in the upcoming school year?**

All classes will practice social distancing to the extent possible as recommended by the CDC. Each day, staff will review distancing and cleanliness protocols that support the safety of all students and staff. Classroom teachers will oversee recess and will review expectations daily. It
will be imperative for adults to talk with young people about why certain actions are being taken and to do so in a manner that expresses care and concern, rather than fear. (DPSCD Re-Opening Plan page 23)

- How will grades, school-based assessments, and state assessments apply this year?

Montessori guides will continue to use MRX for student grading. District and school-based assessments will continue as planned with clear guidance for at home assessment administration. The District will follow Michigan Department of Education guidance for state assessments.

- Will my student get to stay with his class and keep the same Montessori teacher he has had in the past whether virtual or F2F?

The District is procuring Swivl cameras for all core teachers, which will give them the ability to live stream or record lessons for students who may be participating in the lesson in another location. The District aspires to have full time virtual students served by one dedicated teacher and students who are reporting to school served by another teacher. That said, some students, either due to illness or other extenuating circumstances, may not be able to report physically to school and will benefit from access to virtual instruction, which may be asynchronous or synchronous. (DPSCD Re-Opening Plan page 24)

While we deeply understand that a core principle of Montessori is to maintain our learning community, we cannot promise that all students will have the same teacher this year. Every effort will be made to keep classroom communities together.

- How will outdoor learning, meals, and play be implemented by the District?

Outdoor physical education, wherever possible, will be encouraged. (DPSCD Re-Opening Plan page 15)

All District playgrounds will be kept in working order, per the State's playground requirements, and regular cleaning shall continue. (DPSCD Re-Opening Plan page 31)

Classrooms or outdoor areas should be used for students to eat meals at school if distancing guidelines cannot be met. Kindergarten through eighth grade students will eat in classrooms. Lunch schedules will be modified to support social distancing in high school cafeterias in addition to classroom lunch options. (DPSCD Re-Opening Plan page 35)

- Will teachers be required to split time between face to face and virtual instruction? If so, how will this be balanced?
The District is procuring Swivl cameras for all core teachers, which will give them the ability to live stream or record lessons for students who may be participating in the lesson in another location. The District aspires to have full time virtual students served by one dedicated teacher and students who are reporting to school served by another teacher. That said, some students, either due to illness or other extenuating circumstances, may not be able to come physically to school and will benefit from access to virtual instruction, which may be asynchronous or synchronous. (DPSCD Re-Opening Plan page 24)

There are many complexities aligned with asking a teacher to facilitate both face to face and virtual instruction. As a result, in most cases our Montessori teachers will be either virtual or in person.

- Will state standards be met as well as the number of hours students are to be in class?

Our Montessori face to face and virtual curriculum is aligned with the Michigan State Standards and will continue to provide quality instruction for our Montessori students. These resources will empower teachers and school leaders to readily assess student needs and progress, as well as provide appropriate scaffolds and supports.

The number of contact hours will be imposed upon the District based on state funding allocations and requirements.

- If a family opts to not return in the fall, will their space be available in the winter semester or the following fall or will they need to reapply?

If a family chooses to not return virtually or face to face in the fall, their seat will be given to a student on the waitlist and they will need to reapply for the next school year to gain entry into the Montessori program.

- How will staff be selected to teach virtually or in person?

Following the close of the parent survey, Principals will follow district guidelines to determine face to face and virtual teaching selections.

- Will professional development be provided for support staff on the new virtual platform and curriculum?

Yes, all support staff will receive training on the virtual platform, curriculum, and expectations.

- What is the maximum class size for virtual classes?

Please continue to follow DPSCD reopening plan for updates regarding virtual class size.

- Will lesson plans be shared weekly to families to support learning?
Unlike the distance learning structure from Spring 2020, we will now implement a virtual learning structure. Classroom teachers will facilitate lessons using materials from take home kits and virtual resources. Activities will be assigned to each child by teacher throughout the week.

- **What school supplies and uniform will we need for my child this upcoming school year?**
  
  All schools will be hosting a back to school orientation to share this information.

- **Will lessons be posted on DPSCD YouTube channel?**
  
  Videos are the intellectual property of partners and cannot be placed on our district YouTube channel. Our new virtual materials do come with videos for lessons that are available to families through Guidepost based on teachers’ assignments.

- **How will students receive IEP (Individualized Education Plan) services throughout virtual learning?**
  
  Please see the [ESE (exceptional student education) FAQ](#) regarding reopening and virtual ESE services.

- **Will families receive training on the new virtual platforms?**
  
  The District is developing a professional development plan for Schoology and all other platforms. We will provide training on Altitude for on (insert date).

- **When will we be able to pick up resources for virtual learning for the school year?**
  
  The District will release a schedule for materials pick up for virtual students.

- **When will a Montessori Parent Guide be made available?**
  
  At this time the District is deeply committed to ensuring teachers and students have the resources needed to go back to school. Dr. Wash will connect with the DPM (Detroit Public Montessori) Community to collaborate on updates to the Handbook beginning in September.

- **Will there be a Montessori class in the FACE (Family and Community Engagement) Parent Academy?**
  
  Our Montessori Training and Support Coordinator will work with FACE to ensure that a Montessori Way session is included in the winter Parent Academy Catalog.
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