

Office of the Superintendent of Schools
MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Rockville, Maryland

April 29, 2020

MEMORANDUM

To: Members of the Board of Education
From: Jack R. Smith, Superintendent of Schools
Subject: Student Engagement in the Continuity of Learning

Question

During the April 21, 2020 Board meeting, Ms. Smondrowski asked how are we knowing that if we're not hearing from someone it's because they aren't aware of what we're doing?

Response

Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) recognizes the importance of connecting with each and every student in our system, particularly during this time of the COVID-19 pandemic, to ensure they are well and available to learn. To that end, a number of resources are used to engage with all students. The primary means of engagement has been via virtual communication using applications through the *myMCPS* Canvas platform and available apps or Google Classroom during the delivery of instruction and for teacher check-ins. However, for some students and families, additional means of engagement and connectivity are used including e-mail communication and contact via telephone.

MCPS is deeply committed to reaching every student either through digital or other means. The well-being of our students, families, and communities is our top priority and key to our continuity of learning. The attached report outlines our plan for ensuring that students are engaged in the Continuity of Learning.

If you have any questions, please contact Dr. Janet S. Wilson, interim chief of schools.

JRS:JSW:IHS:kde

Attachment

Copy to:
Executive Staff
Ms. Webb

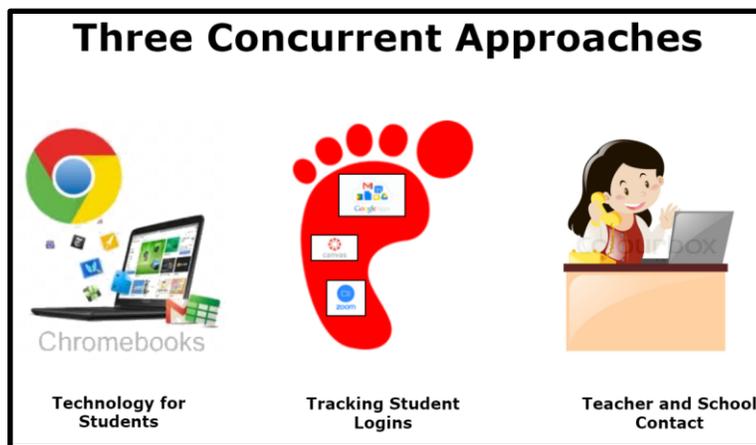
Continuity of Learning - Student Engagement Montgomery County Public Schools

Introduction

In order to monitor student engagement in the Continuity of Learning program, MCPS designed and is implementing a comprehensive student engagement monitoring program that includes multiple data sources and mobilizes staff and resources across the district in order to meet individual student and family needs. The MCPS student engagement plan has three phases: analyzing and tracking individual student engagement at the school and central services level; creating agile outreach and case management action plans to address student needs; and analyzing the quality of student engagement in addition to quantifying student engagement. Details and related data for each phase are outlined below.

Phase I: Analyzing and Tracking Individual Student Engagement at School and Central Services Level

The first phase focuses on connecting students to learning and creating a comprehensive picture of how students may or may not be engaging in the learning process. Three concurrent and ongoing data sources are being used to create this picture: technology distribution; student digital footprint of logins; and school and office outreach data.



Technology for Students

During the last three weeks, MCPS has had three technology distributions where students could pick up a Chromebook and/or hotspot. Distributions on March 26–27 took place at 160 sites, including all elementary and high schools. April 8 distributions were held at 44 sites chosen based on student reservations and home addresses. The third round of technology distribution took place across two days, April 20–21 at four regional sites. The following table displays the number of devices provided for each round of distribution. As more families connect with technology, the engagement data improves. Although students are able to share devices, use personal computers, cell phones, and tablets to connect to learning resources and teachers, more students are engaging when they have a dedicated personal device with a keyboard in order to complete assignments. Therefore, there are no restrictions placed on who is or is not eligible to receive a device. Additional distributions will be planned and held according to need.

Date	Phase	# of Chromebooks	# of Internet Hotspots
March 26–27, 2020	1	43,000	NA
April 8, 2020	2	11,028	1,400
April 20–21, 2020	3	7,900	2,800
Total (as of April 22)		61,928	4,200

Student Digital Footprint from March 30, 2020 through April 17, 2020

MCPS has been able to generate digital footprint data for each student. The data consist of counts of logins to select core systems within a certain date range. Core systems included in the digital footprint are the two learning management systems, Canvas (*myMCPS Classroom*) and Google Apps (includes Google Classroom), and the video conferencing tool, Zoom. Logins to these three systems provide the gateway data we can use to track student engagement and access to learning materials and live instruction/office hours. Students may use other apps to engage in learning; however, it is difficult to do so without using one of these logins first to access the apps and materials. These logins can be tracked regardless of type of device. Therefore, from a digital footprint perspective, we can track logins to these apps across personal computers, Chromebooks, tablets, and cell phones.

Students are able to engage at some level of learning through the use of cell phones and we know that some secondary students are engaging through this venue. Students can use cell phone apps for Canvas, Google Drive, Google Classroom, and Zoom. Students can log into these applications from a cell phone, see assigned work, engage in Zoom sessions, and complete some assignments. However, the use of a device with a full screen and keyboard, such as a Chromebook, ensures the ability to complete more complex assignments. The engagement data over time indicates that as more students receive a Chromebook and/or hotspot, engagement data increases.

School data sheets were generated and reflect each student, core data for that student, digital footprint data, and an overall status of Yes or No based on the digital footprint data.

GRADE	GENDER	RACE	LEP	IEP	FARMS	Canvas	Zoom	Google Apps	Status
1 M	WH	N	N	Y		0	0	0	NO
2 F	WH	N	N	Y		0	0	0	NO
2 F	AS	N	Y	N		0	0	0	NO
1 F	AS	Y	N	N		0	0	0	NO
15 M	HI	Y	Y	Y		0	0	0	NO
5 M	HI	N	Y	Y		0	0	0	NO
1 M	BL	N	Y	Y		0	0	0	NO
1 M	BL	N	Y	N		0	0	0	NO
2 M	WH	N	N	N		0	0	0	NO
1 M	HI	N	N	N		0	0	0	NO
1 M	HI	Y	Y	Y		0	0	0	NO
5 F	BL	N	Y	N		0	0	0	NO
3 M	HI	Y	Y	Y		0	0	0	NO
1 F	WH	N	N	N		0	0	0	NO
2 F	WH	N	N	N		0	2	1	YES
4 M	MU	N	N	N		2	7	18	YES
15 F	BL	N	N	Y		0	6	3	YES
15 M	MU	N	N	N		4	3	8	YES
2 F	MU	N	N	N		0	11	30	YES

The following table provides the MCPS digital footprint data for elementary and secondary students for three points in time: March 30 through April 6; March 30 through April 13; and March 30 through April 17. The data indicate a steady decrease over time for students who do not have a data footprint.

The current rules to generate the “Yes” and “No” digital footprint status follow:

- Elementary Rules Validating Digital Engagement: At least 2 logins to video conferencing tool and at least 2 logins to either myMCPS Classroom or Google Apps; and
- Secondary Rules Validating Digital Engagement: At least 4 logins to either myMCPS Classroom or Google Apps.

Digital Footprint Data from March 30, 2020

Level	Date (from March 30th)	Count of “No” Status	Count of “Yes” Status	Total # of Students	Percent of “No” Status
Elementary*	April 6	18,645	59,651	78,296	24%
	April 13	13,253	78,301	78,301	17%
	April 17	9,402	68,925	78,327	12%
Secondary	April 6	18,449	70,113	88,562	21%
	April 13	8,718	79,846	88,564	10%
	April 17	4,834	83,739	88,573	5.5%

* Elementary numbers include all preK programs, PEP, and Infants and Toddlers

Between March 30 and April 17, 3,382 students had zero logins into the 3 digital platforms being used in Continuity of Learning: Canvas (*myMCPS Classroom*), Google Apps, and Zoom (used for video conferencing live meetings and office hours). Breakdowns by grade level and race/ethnicity are included in the following tables.

No Logins between March 30th and April 17th	
Race/Ethnicity	# of Students with No Logins
AM	11
AS	204
BL	840
HI	1850
MU	89
PI	1
WH	387
Total	3382

No Logins between March 30th and April 17th by Grade Level	
Grade Level	# of Students with No Logins
PreK and Infants/Toddlers	1104
K	399
1	225
2	161
3	164
4	122
5	91
6	70
7	61
8	55
9	312
10	209
11	163
12	246
Total	3382

Because engagement in Continuity of Learning can happen beyond the digital footprint, gathering school-level data on these connections is important. Students and parents/guardians (on behalf of students) are connecting with teachers through e-mail, telephone, text, and paper-packet materials. Ensuring these students are accounted for in the engagement data is critical and so the incorporation of school and central services data collection is included in Phase I of this effort.

Each school has been charged with creating an academic and well-being support team. Each team is tasked with ensuring all students are accounted for and families are connected to resources during this Continuity of Learning experience. For this effort, the academic and well-being support teams at each school were charged with updating school sheets with additional information about students, with a specific focus on the students with a “No” status. “No” status for this round of school level data was based on zero logins between March 30 and April 17. The first round of data entry was completed on April 24. Data in the following table indicates the number of students who make up each category of follow-up or engagement as of April 24.

No Logins between March 30th and April 17th School Follow-Up	
	# of Students
Update	
Phone Call Connection	1051
Email Connection	321
Paper-Packet Engagement	107
Opt-Out	71
Waiting on Technology	621
No Contact or Response	670
Other*	541
Total	3382

*Other: Includes Infants and Toddlers services, students who are in IIS or are attending MC, hospitalizations

Central services staff, including pupil personnel workers (PPWs); parent community coordinators; and specialists in special education, Title 1, and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), will continue to enter data and information for support for individual families. Next steps include the collaboration of school and central services staff on coordinated outreach and support to students and families based on the data. A second round of student engagement data will be run and shared with schools that reflects engagement during the first two weeks of Marking Period 4 and captures the latest technology distribution data.

School and Office Outreach

For students who are not successfully engaged by the aforementioned digital or other identified engagement strategies, coordinated support across central services and school teams will be put in place. Specifically, staff in the Office of Student and Family Support and Engagement is providing well-checks and linking students/families to Tier 2 and 3 interventions and outside resources to assist them to enable engagement in the Continuity of Learning. In addition, principals, counselors, PPWs, and parent community coordinators are helping to deliver technology in neighborhoods and at community centers. They are providing support in translating materials and troubleshooting barriers to engagement. Staff in the Office of Special Education is providing case management support to students and families and also includes these efforts in the engagement data.

Phase II: Creating Agile Outreach and Case Management Action Plans to Address Student Needs

This phase of the student engagement plan focuses on creating and implementing outreach action steps in order to connect families with resources. Using the data from Phase I, academic and well-being support teams, in partnership with PPWs, parent community coordinators, ESOL and Title 1 specialists, and special education coordinators, will develop strategic outreach plans. They will ensure families have the resources they need to effectively engage in Continuity of Learning. This phase began the week of March 23 as we connected families with paper packets, technology, and language translation services in order to support the successful transition to the Continuity of Learning program. This phase has continued each week as school and central services staff have connected with families, delivered resources, and worked to help families continue the transition to this new learning experience. Phase II will continue throughout the Continuity of Learning program.

During this time, MCPS also will continue to distribute Chromebooks and wireless hotspot devices to students whose families were not able to travel to previous distribution sites to receive devices. In order to meet these students where they live, MCPS is transitioning away from mass distribution efforts to targeted community distribution efforts that will allow greater flexibility for schools to help place devices into the hands of students. Targeted community distribution efforts include these options: daily device pick-up hours at a central location; home delivery; small batch distributions by school administrators at locations close to students' homes; and large distributions at school sites. School administrators have the flexibility to choose which distribution or delivery options work best for their students and can rely on support from central office staff to implement their preferred distribution or delivery option.

Phase III: Analyzing the Quality of Student Engagement in Addition to Quantifying Student Engagement

Phase III of student engagement adds the element of quality engagement to the central data collection as well as school and central analysis. This phase utilizes not only the digital footprint and school-central outreach data; it also considers Marking Period 3 grades and Marking Period 4 ongoing academic performance in each class. This detailed level of monitoring will help academic and well-being support teams, as well as central services resources, identify student areas of need and create support structures for students who need them. This phase was implemented Friday, April 17, 2020, as we analyzed academic performance reported on March 13 and compared that to academic performance being reported at the conclusion of Marking Period 3. This analysis will continue with the inclusion of Marking Period 3 grades on April 24, 2020, when grades were posted to student records. Monitoring engagement and academic performance in Marking Period 4 will be the focus of Phase III in the upcoming weeks.