

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

May 27, 2020

MEMORANDUM

To: Members of the Board of Education

From: Jack R. Smith, Superintendent of Schools

Subject: Update to Student Engagement in the Continuity of Learning

At the Board of Education meeting on April 12, 2020, Board Member Rebecca Smondrowski requested information regarding student engagement during the Continuity of Learning (COL). The first student engagement in COL report was provided as an attachment to the memorandum dated April 29, 2020. At the Board meeting on May 12, 2020, Board Member Karla Silvestre requested that the update to student engagement in COL include additional demographic information regarding student engagement during COL. This memorandum provides updated information and additional data following the initial phases of COL.

Update to Student Engagement in COL

Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) recognizes the importance of connecting with each and every student in our system, particularly during 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 through virtual communication using applications through the *myMCPS* Canvas platform and available applications or through Google Classroom during the delivery of instruction and during teacher check-ins. However, there are some students and families for whom additional means of engagement and connectivity are used including e-mail communication and contact via telephone. MCPS is committed to reaching every student either through digital or other means. The well-being of our students, families, and communities is a top priority and key to our COL plan. The updated Continuity of Learning report (Attachment) details our plan to ensure that students are engaged in learning during this time.

If you have any questions, please contact Dr. Janet S. Wilson, interim chief of schools, Office of School Support and Improvement, via e-mail.

JRS:JSW:kde

Attachment

Copy to:
Executive Staff
Ms. Webb

Continuity of Learning - Student Engagement

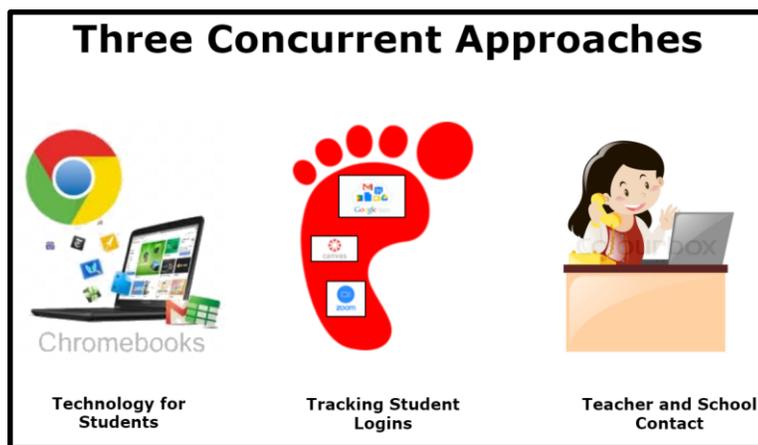
Montgomery County Public Schools

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 components: 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 component are outlined below.

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

The first component 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

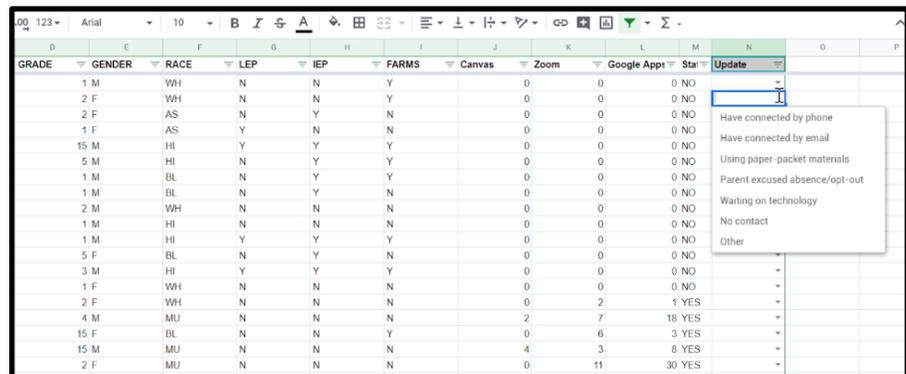
During the first three weeks of remote learning, MCPS had three technology distributions where students could pick up a Chromebook and/or hotspot. Distributions on March 26–27 took place at 160 sites, including all elementary and high schools. April 8 distributions were held at 44 sites chosen based on student reservations and home addresses. The third round of technology distribution took place across two days, April 20–21 at four regional sites. Even though 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 were no restrictions placed on who is or is not eligible to receive a device.

Tracking Student Logins

MCPS has been able to generate a digital footprint data for each student. This data consists 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 (which 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 in this manner. 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

Teacher and School Contact

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, cell phones, 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 are included in Component I of this effort.

Each school was charged with creating an academic and well-being support team. This 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 data sheets with additional information about students, with a specific focus on the students with a “No” status. Central services offices, including Pupil Personnel Workers (PPWs);

Parent Community Coordinators (PCCs); and specialists in the special education, Title 1, and ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) offices will continue to enter data and information on supporting individual families. Next steps include school and office staff collaborating 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 most recent technology distribution data.

School and Office Outreach

For students who are not engaged successfully by the aforementioned digital or other identified engagement strategies, coordinated supports across office and school teams have been implemented. 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 PCCs are helping to deliver technology to neighborhoods and 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 is logging these efforts in the engagement data.

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

This component of the student engagement plan focuses on creating and implementing outreach action steps in order to connect families with resources. Using the data from Component I, academic and well-being support teams, in partnership with PPWs, PPCs, ESOL, and Title I 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 component began the week of March 23, 2020, 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 component 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. Component II will continue throughout the Continuity of Learning program.

Component III: Analyzing the Quality of Student Engagement in addition to Quantifying Student Engagement

Component III of student engagement adds the element of quality engagement to the central data collection as well as school and central analysis. This component utilizes not only the digital footprint and school-central outreach data, it also makes use of 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 component was implemented Friday, April 17, 2020, as we analyzed academic performance reported on March 13, 2020, and compared that to academic performance being reported at the end 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 Component III in the upcoming weeks.

Engagement Data

Finishing Marking Period 3 (Phase I of Continuity of Learning) (Marking Period 4*)

Technology Distribution and Digital Footprint Data from March 30, 2020, through April 17, 2020

MCPS organized three different technology distributions for students between March 26, 2020, and April 22, 2020. The first distribution took place across all elementary and high schools over two days. Students could go to the school closest to where they live to pick up Chromebooks if they needed these technologies to engage in remote learning. The second and third distributions were organized by reservation so that families that submitted a need for technology were able to pick up a Chromebook and an internet hotspot if needed. The following table the counts of technology distributed for each of the distributions.

Date	Distribution	# 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
April 22, 2020-Current (MP 4)	Case Management and Small-batch distributions	4,572	900
Total Student Devices (as of May 22)		66,500	5,100

In addition to distributing technology so that students could engage in remote learning, MCPS aggregated login data for the three core technology platforms that serve as gateways to online learning: *myMCPS* Classroom, Google Apps, and Zoom video conferencing. For Marking Period 3, MCPS focused on identifying and reaching out to any student who had zero logins to any of the three core platforms. Between March 30, 2020, and April 17, 2020, 3,382 students had zero logins into the three digital platforms being used in Continuity of Learning. Breakdowns by grade level are provided in the following tables.

School and central services teams provided updates for students who had zero logins. Data indicate that of these students, many had been contacted successfully and were either waiting for technology or were engaging in paper-pencil activities. The following table indicates the number of students and their updated status as of April 17, 2020.

No Logins between March 30th and April 17th School Follow-Up	
Update	# of Students
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

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

At the same time that schools were following up with students with zero logins during Phase I of remote learning, MCPS began exploring the use of a quality measure for engagement using the digital footprint data. For the initial remote learning experience, the criteria for the quality measure of a “Yes” status for elementary students was a minimum of two logins to live teaching sessions via the video conferencing tool and also a minimum of two logins to either *myMCPS* Classroom or Google Apps. For secondary students, the exploratory quality measure of student logins was a minimum of four logins to either *myMCPS* Classroom or Google Apps. The following table details the MCPS digital footprint data with this initial exploratory quality measure applied for elementary and secondary students during Phase I of learning for three points in time: March 30–April 6; March 30–April 13; and March 30–April 17.

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	65,048	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 prekindergarten programs, Preschool Education Program, and Infants and Toddlers

Marking Period 4 (Phase II and Phase III of Continuity of Learning)

Technology Distribution and Digital Footprint Data from April 20, 2020 through May 7, 2020

Throughout Marking Period 4, MCPS has continued 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 transitioned away from mass distribution efforts to targeted community distribution efforts that allow greater flexibility for schools to help get devices into the hands of students. Targeted community distribution efforts have included options such as: daily device pick up hours at a central location; home delivery; small-batch distributions by school administrators at locations in proximity 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 various central services offices to implement their chosen distribution or delivery option. To date, more than 66,500 Chromebooks and 5,100 internet hotspots have been distributed to students. MCPS has also provided more than 16,000 Chromebooks, more than 900 internet hotspots, and nearly 3,000 document cameras to staff. Distribution continues daily at the 45 West Gude Drive location between 10:00 a.m. and 12:00 p.m. for families and staff with technology needs.

Digital footprint data was run for the first three weeks of Marking Period 4. During the first three weeks of Marking Period 4, 2,281 students had zero logins. As staff in schools followed up with families and updated data, they determined that 226 students have been actively engaging through paper-pencil packets, 169 students have either excused absences or opted out of remote learning, and 204 students are working through technology limitations. There are 1,004 students who require additional outreach efforts in order to determine why they have yet to engage in remote learning.

During Marking Period 4, MCPS has applied a new set of criteria to a quality measure for engaging in digital learning. Criteria of a minimum of three logins per week was applied to all students, Grades K–12, to the digital footprint data. Based on this criteria, the digital footprint data indicated 10.4 percent of MCPS students not logging in at least 3 times per week during the first 3 weeks of Marking Period 4. School and central services staff have been connecting students to identify and eliminate barriers to regular engagement. The following tables outline the data by grade level, race and ethnicity, and service group.

Percent of Students Logging in at least three times per week		
Grade Level	NO	YES
K	3.80%	96.20%
1	5.32%	94.68%
2	4.80%	95.20%
3	4.29%	95.71%
4	3.64%	96.36%
5	3.56%	96.44%
6	6.16%	93.84%
7	7.17%	92.83%
8	8.54%	91.46%
9	13.97%	86.03%
10	13.06%	86.94%
11	14.19%	85.81%
12	25.13%	74.87%
Grand Total	8.01%	90.95%

Demographic Analysis for students logging in three times per week:

Percent of Students Logging in at least three times per week.		
	NO	YES
AM	9.49%	90.51%
AS	7.80%	92.20%
BL	9.93%	90.07%
HI	11.82%	88.18%
MU	8.59%	91.41%
WH	7.35%	92.65%
Grand Total	10.37%	89.63%

Percent of Students Logging in at least three times per week.		
	NO	YES
IEP	9.11%	90.89%
LEP	12.16%	87.84%
FARMS	11.81%	88.19%

In summary, 89.6 percent of MCPS students are actively engaged in remote learning at least 3 times per week. MCPS is diligently working to connect with 1,004 students (less than 1 percent of all students) who have yet to engage in remote learning experiences. In addition, MCPS staff are working with just more than 17,000 students (10.4% of total students) who are engaging but not yet to the engagement standard that we determined (at least three times per week).

Summary	Percent of Students
Students where contact has not yet been made and is still being attempted	<1% (1,004 students)
Students who are engaging but not at the level of three times per week	10.4% (17,175 students)
Students who are engaging at the level of three times per week	89.6% (148,389 students)

MCPS will continue to refine its engagement monitoring strategy as we plan for the new school year and the learning models that may be used in the upcoming year.