

**Spartanburg School
District 4
Return to School Plan
2020-2021**



Dr. W. Rallie Liston, Superintendent

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Dear Parents & Guardians of District 4 Students,

I appreciate the support and encouragement of the District 4 family and community during the unprecedented school closures we experienced in Spring 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. I will always be grateful to District 4 educators who, on short notice, provided instruction for students through online learning and instructional packets, to cafeteria staff members who prepared and packaged meals for students, to drivers who delivered those meals, and to administrators and office staff who provided leadership and guidance during these months. I am also grateful to our students, parents, community, and School Board who supported us throughout all of these endeavors.

After closing the previous school year, we were faced with the task of planning for the 2020-21 school year in the midst of great uncertainty and constantly changing guidance. We began our planning by asking for input from District 4 parents and guardians. You overwhelmingly responded to our request. We received 1,036 survey responses, which represented over 70% of our student population. In addition, principals at each school surveyed or talked with individual faculties to gain their perspectives. We relied on those responses along with guidance from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the SC Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC), and the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP). We also studied the recommendations from the AccelerateED Task Force, which was formed to provide guidance to the SC Superintendent of Education and to school districts across the state.

In Spartanburg School District 4, we understand that our purpose is to educate the students of this community to the highest level possible. The only consideration above that purpose is to maintain the health and safety of our students while in our care and under our supervision. Our guiding principle throughout the entire planning process for the upcoming school year was to determine how those important goals could be accomplished simultaneously. Your input was invaluable to us as we made decisions. It was very clear to us that parents were not comfortable with starting the 2020-21 school year under the traditional school model, as it received the lowest rating of all options on the survey. Parents preferred some type of hybrid model that would support efforts at social distancing. Since the submission of those survey results in June, COVID-19 cases have increased throughout our state, county, and community. Therefore, we determined that a hybrid model on an A/B schedule described in the accompanying plan would provide District 4 the best chance of educating students according to our high standards and supporting their wellbeing.

As you read and study District 4's Return to School Plan, the most important aspect to keep in mind is the *need for flexibility* throughout the entire 2020-21 school year. It is very likely that we will be required to utilize several attendance models this year. We could move from the hybrid model (A/B schedule) into the traditional face-to-face instructional model within a few weeks if we see a significant decrease in COVID-19 cases. On the other hand, we could move from the hybrid model into full school closures with 100% remote learning like we experienced this past Spring. There could be scenarios where most of the district would operate under the hybrid model (A/B schedule), and one school or a single classroom could be required to close depending on increased cases and exposure. As I said, there will be a tremendous need for flexibility this school year. We realize that these various models and continuing need for flexibility make it difficult for parents to plan for childcare and supervision. We understand the

challenges surrounding this constantly developing situation. We ask for your continued support and understanding, as we attempt to accomplish our two goals of educating our students and caring for their health and safety.

Finally, this is a collaborative plan created by the District 4 leadership team and principals from each school. It is designed to address the many questions that parents and guardians may have about the various topics related to this hybrid model. Please remember this is a district plan and schools will need to individualize certain aspects of the plan, as the needs of students vary among the different age groups. Principals will be communicating additional procedures pertinent for their schools. On behalf of our Board of Trustees, parents, students, and staff, I would like to thank our leadership team, chaired by Dr. Kim McAbee, and principals for their many hours of meetings and collaboration that resulted in the District 4 Return to School Plan for 2020-21. I am confident that by working together, we can create a safe, supportive, and healthy learning environment for our students, staff, parents, and community. Thank you in advance for your continuing support and encouragement, as we strive to provide the best education possible in the safest environment possible.

Kindest regards,

W. Rallie Liston
Superintendent

Spartanburg School District Four Return to School Plan 2020-2021

Spartanburg School District Four will be referred to as the "District" throughout this document.

Hybrid Model (A/B)

- Hybrid A/B is a schedule where students attend a full school day on alternating days. The hybrid model was the choice preferred by parents on the parent survey.
- **Students with "A" schedule will attend every Monday and every Wednesday.**
- **Students with "B" schedule will attend every Tuesday and every Thursday.**
- Students will be assigned to A or B schedules according to last names and/or home addresses in an effort to have siblings attend on the same days.
- On the alternating days when students are not meeting face-to-face, students will be completing subject area assignments related to coursework. The assignments on alternating days will be greater than the typical daily homework assignments.
- Students on "A" schedule (Mondays & Wednesdays) will also attend on Friday, August 21st and alternate Fridays thereafter. Students on "B" schedule (Tuesdays & Thursdays) will also attend on Friday, August 28th and alternate Fridays thereafter.
- Students enrolled in the *half-day* 3K program will attend classes daily according to their designated times.
- First Day of School for Students on "A" Schedule : **Monday, August 17th**
- First Day of School for Students on "B" Schedule: **Tuesday, August 18th**
- The 2020-21 School Calendar is attached to this plan (Appendix A).
- Students who come to school on a day not assigned to them will be required to be picked up by the parent or guardian.

Five Additional School Days for Students (Learn, Evaluate, Analyze, Prepare Days - LEAP Days)

- LEAP Days will be held the week of August 3rd and will be used primarily to administer beginning of the year assessments that are required by the SC General Assembly. Schools will schedule students to attend according to their testing schedules. Parents should expect more detailed information from the schools. Schools will make contact with parents to schedule appointments for student testing.

Spartanburg 4 Virtual School

- Parents will be given the option of selecting one of two models to begin the 2020-21 school year:
 - Face-to-face instruction for students on the A/B hybrid model
 - Spartanburg 4 Virtual School for the first semester of school (through December 2020).

- If parents select the Spartanburg 4 Virtual School, there will be required meetings to discuss the online programs and complete the “**Declaration of Intent**”, which will be distributed at the school level meetings. Parents are asked to limit the number of attendees to 2 persons at these meetings. Attendees will be asked to wear masks and maintain social distancing. The dates for these informational meetings are as follows:
 - Woodruff Primary School: Tuesday, July 14th at 9am **or** 6pm at Woodruff Primary School
 - Woodruff Elementary School: Monday, July 13th at 9am **or** 6pm at Woodruff Elementary School
 - Woodruff Middle School: Monday, July 20th at 1pm and 6pm at Woodruff Middle School
 - Woodruff High School: Tuesday, July 21st at 1pm and 6pm at Woodruff High School
- The “**Declaration of Intent**” is due back to the schools by Wednesday, August 5th. ***If a selection has not been made by this date, students will automatically be enrolled for face-to-face instruction on the A/B hybrid model.***
- If parents select Spartanburg 4 Virtual School, the placement for preschool – 5th grade students will be reviewed at 3-week intervals. The placement for 6th – 12th grade students will remain in effect until the end of first semester. (The Superintendent reserves the right to allow students to move from Spartanburg 4 Virtual School to face-to-face instruction at the end of the first quarter/first nine weeks.)
- Students in grades 6 – 12 will complete online assignments from home, but will be required to complete designated APEX assessments at the Spartanburg District Four Learning Center, which is located next to Woodruff High School.
- Primary and elementary students should confirm they have access to compatible devices before selecting Spartanburg 4 Virtual School. A limited number of devices may be available for primary and elementary student use and distributed according to the district’s technology usage agreement. Students in those grades will be assigned a District 4 teacher and will be provided online instruction aligned with the district curriculum guides.
- The District will not utilize learning packets for students who choose Spartanburg 4 Virtual School.

School Closures & Transitions between Models

- Given the recent increase in COVID-19 cases, it is likely closures will occur at some point within the 2020-21 school year. Closures may involve the entire district, a single school, or individual classrooms.
- The District may transition from a hybrid model to a full-time, face-to-face model during decreases in COVID-19 cases. It may implement closure of the entire school district with 100% remote learning during periods of high spread.

Transportation

- Bus routes will be established around the A/B schedules, which may require adjustments to the regular routes.

- Buses will strive to comply with SC Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) guidance of 50% capacity of the total students. In addition, students will be seated according to the DHEC diagram for buses.
- Students and drivers will be required to wear masks while on buses.
- Buses will be cleaned and disinfected upon completion of the morning and afternoon routes.

Physical Entry Points

- Schools will post signs (questionnaires) at entrances to remind parents and students of symptoms of COVID-19.
- Visitors will not be allowed into student areas.
- Deliveries must be coordinated through school principals.
- Parent-teacher conferences may be held virtually or by phone.
- Parents and visitors are required to wear masks when entering the schools.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- The District will adhere to SC Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) guidelines and/or mandates regarding the use of personal protective equipment (PPE), such as masks and gloves. Students and staff must wear a face covering when entering a school building, moving through the hallways, during carline/drop off or pickup, and when social distancing is not possible or optimal. Special considerations will be made for those students who are younger than two years old, who have trouble breathing, who are unable to remove the covering without assistance, and those with special healthcare or educational needs (IEP, 504, IHP). SC DHEC guidelines are updated frequently. Parents will be notified of changes in practices based on DHEC guidance.
- Plexiglass protectors/dividers will be installed in lobbies and main offices.
- Small, plastic dividers will be provided for one-on-one assessments with students and meetings where participants are in close contact.
- Schools will be provided with contactless thermometers.

Handwashing, Hand Sanitizers, & Disinfectants

- Students will be reminded to wash their hands frequently with soap and water, particularly after entering the building or classroom. If soap and water are not available, students should use hand sanitizers.
- High-touch surfaces (doorknobs, handrails, light switches, etc.) will be cleaned with disinfectants throughout the school day.
- Custodians, cafeteria staff, bus drivers, and nurses will follow cleaning and disinfecting protocols according to SC Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) and Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) guidelines.

Classroom Practices

- The purpose of the hybrid (A/B) schedule is to promote social distancing inside the classrooms and on buses.

- Student seating will be spaced 6 feet apart when possible. Students will face in the same direction.
- Students will be asked to bring only essential items (bookbags, homework, etc.) into the schools.
- Teachers will limit the sharing/handling of school supplies, books, and other materials.

Special Classes

- Special area teachers may deliver instruction in the students' regular classrooms instead of art, music, and P.E. classrooms at the primary and elementary levels.
- Computer lab instructors will promote social distancing during computer classes. Computers will be cleaned between uses with a product approved for technology.
- Special education resource teachers may deliver services in the general education classrooms instead of the resource rooms.

Field Trips

- The District does not plan to approve any field trips for the 2020-21 school year.
- Schools will limit assemblies, programs, and speakers in order to provide for social distancing.

Food Service

- Breakfast and lunch will be served on the days students are physically present at school.
- Meals will be served in the school cafeteria and in some classrooms to promote social distancing.
- A combination of bag lunches (cold meals) and to-go boxes (hot meals) will be served to students throughout the week.
- Students will not be able to self-serve their meals.
- Students will be asked to limit cash transactions.
- Students should wash hands or use hand sanitizer before eating.
- If funded, the District will send meals home with students or provide for pick-up of meals on alternating days that students do not attend classes.

Health Room & Isolation Area

- Whenever symptoms of COVID-19 present at school, teachers will send students to the health room to be examined by the school nurse. If the school nurse believes the symptoms indicate the probability of COVID-19, parents will be notified immediately and asked to pick up the student from school.
- Until the arrival of the parent, the student will be isolated from other students in the health room through the use of a screen or divider. In addition, the student will be required to wear a mask while he/she is waiting to be picked up.
- Parents should update health records and provide the school nurse with the latest health information on students.
- Parents should confirm emergency phone numbers are updated.

Notification of Symptoms & Cases

- School nurses and a district administrator will communicate directly with the SC Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) to determine the next steps in each situation.
- The DHEC exclusion and notification guidance will be followed. (Appendix B: SC DHEC Interim COVID-19 Guidance for Schools: Management of Suspect and Confirmed COVID-19 Cases).
- The DHEC re-entry guidance will be followed when a child is ready to re-enter school after being excluded for a case or symptoms of COVID-19. (Appendix B: SC DHEC Interim COVID-19 Guidance for Schools: Management of Suspect and Confirmed COVID-19 Cases).
- School nurses will comply with HIPPA regulations in the handling of COVID-19 cases.

Restrooms & Water Fountains

- Restroom breaks will be scheduled to provide better opportunities for social distancing in the restrooms.
- Students will not be allowed to use water fountains. However, students may bring bottles of water from home.

Recess & Physical Activity

- Recess and physical activity periods will be scheduled to provide better opportunities for social distancing on the playgrounds and campuses.
- Teachers will structure and limit the sharing of balls, toys, and other play equipment.
- Students should wash or sanitize hands upon return from playgrounds and play areas.

IEP and 504 Meetings

- The District encourages virtual and phone meetings instead of on-campus meetings when possible and agreeable to all parties.
- When face-to-face IEP and 504 meetings are necessary, the meeting size should not exceed 8 participants in order to promote social distancing.
- All requirements related to school entry and face-to-face meetings will be followed. (Refer to Physical Entry Points section of this document.)

Gifted & Talented Programs

- Students who would like to participate in screenings for artistically gifted programs (gifted art & gifted music) will be allowed to do so during the initial weeks of school. These screenings are typically conducted in May of each year.
- Students who participate in the academically gifted program at the elementary level may receive gifted services within their regular classrooms and/or may be served on Fridays.

Social, Emotional, & Mental Health Needs

- Parents should contact school counselors to request screening and/or counseling for social and emotional needs.
- Parents should contact school mental health counselors to request screening or counseling for mental health needs. They will be asked to complete a referral process.

Registration – Online & In Person

- **Online**

- In response to the parent surveys, the District is planning to offer online registration this summer.
- Online registration is expected to be operational from mid- to late July. Schools will issue an automated message to parents notifying them when online registration is available.
- Parents of current District 4 students will access online registration through the PowerSchool Parent Portal. Parents will use their regular log-in codes for access.
- Parents of students new to District 4 should contact the individual schools to schedule times to complete enrollment paperwork and present the required documents, such as birth certificate, immunization records, and proof of residency. Special programs, such as preschool programs, will require additional documents.
- Enrollment of students new to the District must be completed before students can register for the 2020-21 school year.
- School fees and meal plans may be paid by check/money order through the mail, debit/credit cards over the phone, or in person.

- **In Person**

- For parents who prefer or need to register in person, Monday, August 3rd and Tuesday, August 4th will be designated for in-person registration. Students on “A” schedule should register on Monday, August 3rd. Students on “B” schedule should register on Tuesday, August 4th.
- At registration, social distancing will be in place along with defined traffic patterns and COVID-19 screening questionnaires. Masks will be required for all adults.
- The parent/guardian should be the only person to register the student.
- Parents of students new to District 4 should contact the individual schools to schedule times to complete enrollment paperwork and present the required documents, such as birth certificate, immunization records, and proof of residency. Special programs, such as preschool programs, will require additional documents. Parents should also bring emergency contact numbers for students.
- Enrollment of students new to the District must be completed before students can register for the 2020-21 school year.

Great Start Woodruff! - Saturday, August 8th

- Great Start is an annual event hosted by area churches and faith-based ministries. Bookbags filled with school supplies are distributed to students free of charge.
- This year, Great Start will be held on **Saturday, August 8th at Woodruff First Baptist Church**, which is located across from Woodruff High School. The event will begin at 8am and end at 10am.
- There will be 3 stations. Parents and students should stay in their cars and drive through the designated pick-up locations.

Athletic Programs

- The District's athletic programs follow the requirements established by the SC High School League (SCHSL).