

## **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)**

### **Remote Learning - April 2020**

#### **Western Springs #101**

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As expected, the Governor took action last Friday to announce that the suspension of in-person instruction will continue through the end of the 2019-20 school year. The following is a set of the most frequently asked questions we have received regarding the remainder of the school year and beyond as well as other important and timely issues. Most of the information below is tentative in nature and is subject to change as alterations to the current shelter-in-place orders evolve. We hope this information is helpful but invite District 101 parents to reach out to us any time for clarifications as well as check our website regularly for updates.

### **Remainder Of The Current School Year**

#### **How will the remainder of the school year be structured?**

The school year will continue to run through our final scheduled day of school, Wednesday, June 3. As well, eighth graders' final day of school will be Wednesday, May 27, consistent with our original calendar. For all students, pre-K through 8, the next four Mondays (April 27 & May 4, 11, 18) will be instructional days focusing on our specials' classes, student wellness, and social-emotional learning. Instructional expectations will continue consistent with the Parent Message forwarded on April 3. These expectations will continue to be centered around:

- Daily personal interactions between teachers and students including the continued expansion of regular video meetings and/or instruction.
- Continued emphasis on reading, English Language Arts (ELA), and math at the elementary grades and all content areas for McClure students.
- Regular and ongoing formative assessment feedback to students, with elementary students' report cards focused on standards reporting, and McClure students receiving final grades of A, B, or I. As a point of emphasis, McClure students' final grade point averages (GPA) can only be enhanced by final fourth-quarter grades; grades of A, B or I that raise a student's overall GPA will be factored in. Grades that negatively impact a students' GPA will be reported, but will not be factored into the overall grade point average.

#### **What is the plan for retrieving students' personal items from school and returning District items such as iPads and library books?**

Students at all four schools have personal items remaining in desks, lockers and gym lockers. At Field Park, Forest Hills, and Laidlaw, classroom teachers and building principals are coordinating the collection and packaging of all student items, including any remaining medications housed in the nurse's office. Principals are in the process of developing schedules that will invite families to visit the building to gather these materials in a manner that brings only a few students/families to the building at the same time, in line with social distancing mandates. When families return to their elementary

building to gather personal items, all are asked to return school library books at the same time. Additionally, students in kindergarten through grade two are asked to also return District iPads and/or Chromebooks, and chargers. This will allow us to image and prepare the iPads for use next school year. Elementary students/families currently in grades three through five should plan on keeping their Chromebooks for use over the summer. Families can plan for this one-stop pick-up and drop-off to take place during the final week of school, likely during the days of May 27-29 and June 1-3.

At McClure, students will be scheduled to return to school during this same time period (May 27 through June 3) to clean out lockers/physical education lockers and return library books and any other District 101 materials at this same time. One parent may attend with students during their scheduled time. Only a very limited number of students will be scheduled to be in the building at one time, so parents/students are asked to please adhere to the date/time scheduled for their visit.

Principals will forward scheduled times to all families by mid-May. Families with multiple students at a building will be scheduled so that only one visit to a building is necessary.

## **End Of Year Traditions & Celebrations**

End-of-year activities and traditions are designed to provide students with a fun and memorable end to the school year, as well as provide students, parents, staff, and families with appropriate closure and celebrations together as they finish their elementary or McClure years. With that in mind...

### **What is the plan for eighth grade graduation?**

We have pursued a number of options for celebrating and recognizing members of the McClure Class of 2020. These explorations have ranged from holding a traditional graduation ceremony to more creative, socially acceptable and safely distanced options, such as hosting a virtual ceremony. In the end, we have not been able to receive a go-ahead for any type of ceremony that puts a larger number of people in any one setting. And, although as of the writing of this FAQ we still await the Governor's next order pertaining to stay-at-home and social distancing, all indicators are that gatherings of more than ten people will not be permitted, no matter the setting - indoor, outdoor, with appropriate spacing or dividers, etc. Hence, the plan(s) for graduation are as follows:

- During the afternoons/evenings of May 26-28, graduating students and their families will be visited at their homes by our traveling "Commencement Caravan." Without spoiling some of the fun surprises and details right now, please know that families will receive a general schedule, overview, and appropriate necessary details in advance of this week so that all can enjoy the "Caravan."
  - Eighth grade awards - traditionally a stand-alone event held the night before graduation - will be folded into the plans associated with our Commencement Caravan tour.

- Because a gathering of all graduates and their families continues to be the best way to celebrate, we are also placing a tentative traditional graduation ceremony on the calendar. Families are asked to pencil in Monday, June 29 for this event.
  - We must be clear that while we are hopeful that progress for all of society allows for such an event - this date is still more than two months away - from every indicator that has been shared with us from Springfield, we anticipate that a gathering such as this is unlikely to be permitted any time during the summer. We have 150 members in the Class of 2020. With parents in attendance, we would have a room of 450 people. Include just McClure staff and that number swells to 500. Our traditional graduation at LTHS South usually attracts approximately 1,200 people. No indication from ISBE, Springfield, or Governor Pritzker leads us to believe that any gathering from 150 to 1,200 people will be permitted in summer 2020. For this reason, we want families and staff alike to know that June 29 is our pencil-in and hopeful date; however, we are not advocating for the cancellation or changing of travel - or other important plans for this date. We are hopeful, but we are also realistic about our chances, and we wish to be as transparent as possible to everyone about our plans and expectations.

### **What is the plan for fifth grade clap-out's?**

We plan to create a virtual clap-out for our fifth grade students on the final day of school, June 3. Details on the virtual clap-outs will be forthcoming from building principals. We also plan to hold an in-person clap-out on/around the first day of school in August. As part of this plan, we hope to strike a balance for our students that allows for them to embrace and enjoy the excitement as new sixth graders at McClure while also providing for a return to their home elementary school. We hope this return will allow them to say hello to their grade school teachers while being celebrated by parents, current students, and staff alike. Details on this aspect of our fifth grade celebration will be forthcoming near the end of the school year.

### **What is the plan for fifth grade orientation at McClure?**

The McClure staff has already begun work on a video welcome and orientation that will be shared with rising sixth graders during the month of May. Additionally, McClure will welcome students for the first time as a group in the early weeks of August. This Open House visitation event will allow students and parents the chance to visit McClure in a casual manner, walking the building, visiting classrooms, and hearing from our building administrators a few weeks prior to the first day of school. Details on the August visitation will be shared over the summer.

### **What can we expect for Summer School?**

#### Academic Summer School

Academic summer school will be held during the first two weeks of August, assuming that State provisions allow for this level of gathering by that time of the summer. If provisions prohibit Summer School starting at this time, we are still undecided as to whether we would simply cancel or hold

Summer School classes virtually. Parents should anticipate hearing from teachers/principals if their daughter/son has been recommended for academic summer school prior to the end of May.

### Elective Summer School

Generally, Elective Summer School classes are being cancelled, with the exception of the August 10-14 sessions of the Bulldog Basketball Camp and Volleyball Camp. We will await guidance on how mid-sized group gatherings will be handled as August approaches before we formally decide whether to hold or cancel these camps. Additionally, there are some current classes that may be able to be moved from their original June slot to early-August. Summer School Director Heidi Hanner has begun the process of communicating with District staff regarding which classes might be offered as an August option. Once details are finalized, parents will be communicated with directly from Mrs. Hanner, with the following options:

- Refunds will be forwarded to parents for any classes that will not be rescheduled for August.
- Parents whose students already been accepted into an elective class that will run in August will be given the option to keep students enrolled or receive a refund.
- As open slots are identified for elective classes that will continue to be held, parents will be notified, allowing for summer sign-up until these classes are filled.

Parents should expect communications and/or refunds by mid-June. Mrs. Hanner's contact information is [hhanner@d101.org](mailto:hhanner@d101.org).

### Summer Band and Orchestra Camp

We will wait to better see what the landscape is regarding allowances for gatherings of "mid-sized groups" as we approach August. Once we have clarity on this important aspect, Band and Orchestra parents will receive information regarding these camps that are usually held in early- to mid-August each summer.

### **How about sixth grade Outdoor Education?**

This is a challenging issue. Outdoor Education is an important and integral sixth-grade spring event and experience. We - along with parents and students alike - value the lessons, bonding, and learning that students receive each year during this 2.5 day event. We are considering options available to offer a similar/parallel event in the fall of our current sixth graders' seventh-grade year, but outside of that conceptual approach, no additional details have been put together. We will communicate with current sixth grade families if/as plans develop.

## **Looking Forward To Fall 2020**

### **What can be expected for next school year?**

#### Fall expectations

While many of our summer expectations have been tempered by the information we have been receiving, our expectations for a fall return are a bit more optimistic than some schools and

communities have been sharing. For now, our planning for the 2020-21 school year is based on our belief that we will return to in-person learning as originally scheduled. This would mean that students' first day of school would be Wednesday, August 26. We do, however, anticipate that many aspects of a return to school may look very different than past school years. These differences include the following that are already within our consideration and planning:

- The potential for some form of mandatory health screening/testing for adults, students, or both, recommended or required prior to the start of the school year, and/or periodically through the first semester of 2020-21.
- Masks, gloves, disinfectants, wipes, handwashing and other safety related practices and protocols being implemented or enhanced. Our procurement process for some of these basic safety items has already begun, with Nurse Joan Krilic leading our processes in these areas.
- One potentially major impacting factor could be a call from State leaders to limit the density of students and adults within a school building. If such a mandate is placed on us, considerations and planning have already begun as we explore options associated with an am/pm schedule for students and/or an every-other day attendance practice. Either of these practices, if density-reduction mandates are placed on us, would obviously reduce our overall social interaction/student density by 50%. We are very hopeful that none of these relatively extreme practices are necessary to be implemented, but planning and communication will continue as we learn more, as contingency planning is part of everyone's reality right now.

#### *Moving on to the next grade level*

As shared in our April 3 parent communication, all students will be promoted to the next grade level to start the 2020-21 school year.

#### *Academic Leveling and Closing Learning Gaps*

One of our most important responsibilities when we return in the fall will be to gauge each students' academic readiness as they move on to the next grade level. District 101 takes pride in our ability to identify students' current level of academic performance and deliver differentiated and individualized instruction in a manner that keeps all students learning and growing. We are the first to acknowledge that in no way can remote learning match what our teachers and staff are able to provide to your children every day during our normal in-person schooling. However, we also recognize that we have many advantages in this area, including engaged and amazing students, involved and highly capable parents, and a hard-working and talented staff who were as ready as any staff in Illinois to quickly transition into a remote experience where learning could be a focus from the start. Our students and staff have technology in their hands, and are used to that technology's integration to enhance student learning. D101 teachers are well-versed in a variety of instructional practices well beyond the stand-and-deliver lecture model. Finally, our students and teachers together have, for many years, engaged in feedback and assessment focused on learning, standards, and growth over simple grade assignment and student sorting. It is in this area of assessment that much of our early work next year will be driven as we welcome students back to school.

Our teachers regularly gather assessment information on their students, and in most classes this is true every day. This is what we refer to as formative assessment, and it is this regular and on-going assessment gathering that allows our teachers to provide students with “next step thinking” guidance through descriptive feedback. Vertical articulation between grade-level teachers is always an important element to ensure learning continuity as students move from one grade-level to the next. Part of our responsibility as an administrative team will be to create even stronger teacher-to-teacher articulation prior to the fall so that receiving grade teachers know not only how each student has performed, but also how content coverage has proceeded through these unique spring months. Our instructional coaches worked hard with grade-level teams in the initial weeks of remote learning to establish priority learning standards in each of our content areas. Hence, we not only have content areas with varying emphasis areas for instruction, but there are additional priorities within those specific content areas that all teachers will focus. We believe this approach ensures that all students will get maximum learning support through the end of the year, and classrooms across grade-levels will have consistent system-wide content area pacing and coverage.

Finally, our standardized assessment practices - MAP testing at grades two through eight, Fountas and Pinnell reading assessments at our elementary grades, and math probes in our primary grade levels - will play a major role in our leveling, reteaching, and grade level content area adjustments in the fall. It is our normal practice to spend a considerable amount of time during the month of September on these benchmarking assessments, as they play a major role in helping teachers determine students’ current level of performance in many key areas - reading and math at the top of the list - so that instruction and interventions can be targeted to the individual student level. These regular assessment practices will be especially important in rounding out our teachers’ understanding of where student levels are, and in combination with our vertical articulation between grade level staff, will establish our foundation for additional instruction and intervention for the 2020-21 school year.

The good news piece of this involved process is that our front-end assessment practices have been in place for nearly a decade, providing us with solid local norms on what levels we should expect our students to perform at each grade level. And, our teachers are outstanding at using the data received to guide their instruction and interventions with children. Finally, it is also important to note that each of our four buildings has been rated as “quadrant one” schools by the Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA), the design group that developed MAP testing. Quadrant one schools are rated as “high achieving AND high growth” schools, meaning that you send us very able and ready students AND our staff regularly gets well more than a year’s worth of academic growth in student learning each year of school. We know that we will have work to do when students return, but we are ready to ensure that learning gaps will be a short-term blip, and not something that stays with students over time. Our confidence in our system and in our staff is strong, and our readiness to deliver for our students will be job one when we return in August!

## Miscellaneous

### Zoom

You may recall that at the onset of e-learning, we had many security-related concerns with the video conferencing platform Zoom. For that reason, we limited our staff to the use of the more secure and integrated Google Meet for video work with students. About two weeks ago, we opened up Zoom to a limited number of D101 staff and students, as our Speech Pathologists and other intervention staff were permitted to use the platform with their students for teletherapy purposes. In this pilot, our staff utilized the more defined safety protocols, including security passwords and other security best practices, with an ask of both our technology and special services staff to provide feedback on safety and functional enhancements of Zoom vs. Google Meet. The feedback we have received on both issues has been very positive, so we have now opened up Zoom for use by any D101 teacher who prefers this platform, with an initial start of no sooner than Monday, April 27. We have asked staff who plan to move to Zoom to take the following steps:

- Communicate clearly with students and parents about their plan to move to Zoom if a decision to change to this platform has been made.
- Utilize a District-developed set of security steps in establishing Zoom sessions.
- Maintain a single video conferencing platform (Zoom or Google Meet) moving forward as to simplify and clarify expectations for students through the end of the school year.

### Advanced Placement and Out-of-Level Testing

Because we do not have the ability to gather all student assessment data typically utilized for advanced placement recommendations, we will adjust our advanced placement process to accommodate this new set of circumstances. We will communicate these changes with staff over the next week-plus and then collect relevant student data from teachers over the first couple of weeks in May. Initial student placements will be made and communicated by early June, at which time revised appeals processes and timelines will also be announced.

Fortunately, we do already possess all data indicators with one exception--the out-of-level assessment(s), typically offered in May. As such, we will make initial placement recommendations using available data (Winter MAP\*--criteria will be adjusted to reflect winter norms, CogAT\* Composite, CogAT\* Quantitative [math] and/or Verbal [ELA], Professional Judgement) and amend our process for requiring and/or gathering out-of-level information to be the following:

Out-of-Level testing, normally a component taken into consideration prior to our sharing initial advanced placement recommendations, will be offered only to students whose available data indicate advanced placement may be appropriate, but who do not yet qualify for AP with the existing information available (MAP, CogAT Composite, CogAT Quantitative [math] and/or Verbal [ELA], Professional Judgement). Students who would not meet placement criteria even with a maximum out-of-level test result will not be offered testing this year unless parents choose to appeal the initial placement recommendation, in which case, out-of-level testing will be a required component that will

accompany the parent appeal. Parents with children whose placement may be impacted by out-of-level testing results will be contacted directly by the building principal by July 1.

\*It has always been our practice to use the highest available score for all standardized assessments, not just the most recent. We will continue this practice.

### **Special Education**

Families with children receiving special service support should have already received [communication in this letter](#) from Gini Sulek and Maureen Moran. Questions regarding special education services should be forwarded to them directly at: [gsulek@d101.org](mailto:gsulek@d101.org) and [mmoran@d101.org](mailto:mmoran@d101.org)

### **Technology Support**

Please visit the following for tech support tips, communications, and steps to secure a loaner: <https://sites.google.com/d101.org/d101-e-learning/home>

### **Kindergarten Registration and Pre-School Screening**

As of today, only targeted pre-school screening is being considered prior to the reopening of school. Parents who have questions or concerns about your three to five year old child's development should contact Special Services Director Gini Sulek at [gsulek@d101.org](mailto:gsulek@d101.org).

Kindergarten Registration materials are due to the Administrative Offices by April 27. For parents of incoming kindergarten students who have not yet submitted registration materials, who have questions, or who need to request materials can do so by contacting Janice Zeman at [jzeman@d101.org](mailto:jzeman@d101.org). Kindergarten screening will not be conducted this summer.

In place of our typical May Kindergarten Visit day, it is our intention to offer a Parent/Student Orientation prior to the start of the school year. More information will be forthcoming from our building principals.

### **Parent Feedback Survey**

We are asking that parents take ten minutes (or less) to provide us with important feedback about you and your child(ren)'s experiences thus far through the Remote Learning process. The parent survey can be accessed [here](#). Parents are asked to complete this feedback survey by Friday, May 1.

## **Contact Information**

Until further guidance is provided by the State, our daily and regular on-site personnel will be limited. The Administrative Offices will have personnel present every day. Custodial and maintenance staff will be on-site at our four schools daily. Should you have any additional questions or need to

communicate with us until return-to-work parameters are further relaxed, please do not hesitate to contact us at the following:

**D101 Administrative Offices** (708) 246-3700

**District Website** [d101.org](http://d101.org)

**Field Park** [aburger@d101.org](mailto:aburger@d101.org)  
[cblum@d101.org](mailto:cblum@d101.org)

**Forest Hills** [rcorrough@d101.org](mailto:rcorrough@d101.org)  
[emclaughlin@d101.org](mailto:emclaughlin@d101.org)

**McClure** [dchick@d101.org](mailto:dchick@d101.org)  
[jbillingsley@d101.org](mailto:jbillingsley@d101.org)  
[kfuhr@d101.org](mailto:kfuhr@d101.org)

**Laidlaw** [edebartolo@d101.org](mailto:edebartolo@d101.org)  
[ewalker@d101.org](mailto:ewalker@d101.org)

We hope that all of our families remain safe, and we continue to look forward to seeing our students, staff, and parents back together as soon as it is safe to do so. Until then, take care and be well!

Sincerely,  
Brian Barnhart  
Superintendent