



COVID-19 2020-21 School Reopening

Frequently Asked Questions

Updated 8-10-20

As parents and guardians continue to cope with the uncertainty surrounding COVID-19's impact on the community, and as school reopening plans are being finalized, one thing is for certain. Learning in the fall will not be the same experience as it was for students in the spring. When the decision was made to close schools on March 15, teachers had just days to transition their lessons to a remote learning environment. At the same time, the District's goal was to provide flexibility and grace as families, teachers, and staff faced this public health crisis.

Now, with months of preparation, research, and feedback from parents and teachers, the School District of Newberry County has outlined a reopening plan that guides the District as it progresses through the start of the school year and throughout the pandemic. Questions and answers will be updated frequently; please check back often for new information.

What options does my student have this year?

The District is planning for students to return to instruction via the hybrid model (Option 1). Students who wish to have an eLearning experience for the entire year can choose the Newberry ONE Institute for eLearning (Option 2). Please visit https://core-docs.s3.amazonaws.com/documents/asset/uploaded_file/811070/Revised_SDNC_Reopening_Options_2020-2021.pdf for a graphic that explains each option.

When will the school year start?

The School Board approved an amended calendar with an August 24 start date for students. A copy of this calendar can be found on the District website or by using this link: <https://core->

docs.s3.amazonaws.com/documents/asset/uploaded_file/809834/2020-2021_Calendar.pdf. Students will visit their zoned school of attendance for LEAP testing between August 17-21.

What is LEAP?

LEAP stands for Learn, Evaluate, Analyze, and Prepare, and it will take place Aug. 17-21. These five instructional days were added by and funded by the General Assembly and are for ALL rising Pre-K through 8th graders, regardless of which option is chosen (hybrid or Newberry ONE eLearning). During this time, students will come to their zoned schools of attendance for diagnostic testing (bus transportation will be provided if needed). Students will complete testing individually or in small groups and will be socially distanced. School staff will communicate with parents regarding which day/time their student is scheduled to attend LEAP, and students will only be asked to attend for one day. Breakfast and lunch will be provided. The District is planning to schedule device pickup during this time as well.

When is registration?

The District encourages parents to complete registration and pay fees online using the Snap Code sent to them by their child's school. The link to online registration is <https://secure.infosnap.com/family/message?code=actionprivate>. Parents can also complete this process in the PowerSchool Parent Portal. Fees can be paid by credit card online or by calling the school's bookkeeper. Parents who wish to register in person should do so at their child's school August 12 (1 pm-6 pm) and August 13 (8 am-1 pm).

In an effort to ensure social distancing occurs, classroom capacity will be limited to 50% or less. Students will be divided into two cohorts, called **Group 1** and **Group 2**. Group 1 will report on Mondays and Thursdays, and Group 2 will report on Tuesdays and Fridays. Every Wednesday will be a virtual learning day. Virtual learning days will NOT consist of live-streamed content from teachers or class meetings. Students will work on assignments posted in Schoology at their own pace on these days. This is also a time they can get extra help or assistance from their teacher(s). Siblings/households will be grouped together, regardless of which school they attend.

When will teachers return?

Teachers of Pre-K through Grade 8 will return on August 10 for LEAP and professional development/teacher preparation. Teachers of Grades 9-12 will return for professional development/teacher preparation on August 17.

What is the hybrid model?

What is an LMS?

LMS stands for Learning Management System and includes software that enables educational institutions to create and manage lessons, courses, quizzes and other instructional materials. The LMS adopted by the District is called Schoology.

How will virtual learning in the hybrid model be different from remote learning in the spring of 2020?

Virtual learning for all students will be more structured, expectations will be clear, and teachers and students will follow new guidelines. There will be no live teaching on these days; live teaching will be reserved for the two in-person instructional days at school. Students will receive assignments, videos, and other resources through the Schoology LMS for their virtual days. Students who do not have Internet access can download these items at the end of each school day in order to have access while learning from home. This is different from the Newberry ONE Institute for eLearning (please continue reading for more information about that program).

How is hybrid for high school students going to differ from the hybrid for Grades K-8? What will changing classes look like? Will high school students have cohorts?

High school will look very similar to how it looks traditionally. There is no way to put high school students into cohorts (beyond the Group 1 and Group 2 cohorts) because they all have different course requests and needs. In order to ensure social distancing, class changes will be closely monitored by staff. Students will be required to follow directional signs when walking.

Will students be provided with a computer or tablet?

All students, regardless of which format they choose (hybrid or Newberry ONE Institute for eLearning) will be issued a device for use at home and school throughout the school year. Pre-K through Grade 2 students will be issued an iPad. Students in Grades 3-12 will receive a Dell laptop. The Schoology LMS will be used to house assignments and other resources for each class.

Is there a technology fee?

No.

How are teachers preparing for virtual learning?

Professional development for teachers, guidance counselors, instructional support personnel, and library media specialists will begin the week of August 10 (August 17 for high schools). Topics for learning will include technology integration, assessment and progress monitoring, and content-specific resources.

In the event that the hybrid model were to go virtual (such as if the COVID-19 numbers spike or there is a state-wide shutdown), will virtual learning look like Newberry ONE eLearning?

No. In the event of a move from hybrid to all virtual, instruction will differ from Newberry ONE. Assignments, assessments, activities, and content would be provided through the LMS and would be more self-paced with access to teachers, as needed.

Will students be required to wear masks? Will teachers and other staff be required to wear masks?

Students will be required to wear cloth face coverings on buses, during carpool/bus drop off or pickup, upon entering a school building, all transitions in hallways, in cafeterias, libraries, and in the classroom. Student face coverings may be removed for mask breaks for 5 minutes every 30 minutes upon teacher or administrator direction while in the classroom when seated and socially distanced or during outdoor activities with social distancing in place. All students will be given one cloth mask. Parents are strongly encouraged to send their child with a mask that their child prefers and is comfortable wearing. Parents are also encouraged to indicate their child's name on the mask that is sent from home. If a student forgets his/her cloth mask, a disposable mask will be given to the student as supplies are available. All cloth masks must adhere to the dress code that can be found in student handbooks.

Staff will be required to wear cloth face coverings on buses, all transitions in hallways, and all commons areas such as cafeterias, libraries, workrooms etc. In the classroom, staff are also required to wear cloth face coverings. If staff is at the front of the room, they may wear a shield only if socially distanced. Staff can also choose to wear a cloth face covering and shield at all times.

Why is there a change in the mask requirement?

The amendment to the mask requirement was made in conjunction with mounting evidence of the effectiveness of wearing face masks in lowering the risk of the transmission of the virus. It's especially important to be more restrictive with the requirement when our community is in high disease activity. We understand that wearing a mask can be challenging, which is why students will have mask breaks indoors and will be allowed to take their masks off outside as long as social distancing is maintained. We will also work to maintain social distancing and promote good hand hygiene.

Will students be required to stay in the same classroom all day?

We want to keep student groups or cohorts together as much as possible to limit the amount of children who could potentially have to be quarantined if there is a positive case in a school.

How will students who have special needs be accommodated during the virtual portion of the hybrid model?

Accommodations for students with special needs will be made in accordance with each student's Individual Educational Plan (IEP) and/or 504 Plan to the extent practicable.

How will English learners be accommodated during the virtual portion of the hybrid model?

English learners will continue to have access to standards-based instruction on virtual learning days, and ESOL teachers and content area teachers will provide services and instructional modifications to identified students based on individual plans.

How are schools preparing for the return of students?

School principals and District staff are evaluating class assignments and fine-tuning procedures and practices to be in keeping with social distancing requirements as recommended by CDC and DHEC guidelines. Administrators will prepare offices, classrooms, hallways, entries, and exits for recommended social distancing and will ensure common areas are disinfected regularly.

What happens if another student or teacher in my child's class tests positive for COVID-19 or is quarantined?

We will follow DHEC guidelines for positive cases of COVID-19 in a classroom. As of now, the class and teacher would be quarantined for 14 days after last contact with the positive case if social distancing has not been reliably maintained. If a child is quarantined because of a close contact with a positive case of COVID-19 outside of school, the other members of the class would not necessarily be quarantined.

Are parents and teachers going to have to sign a waiver releasing the district from liability if a student or faculty member becomes ill?

No.

What are the differences between virtual learning in the hybrid model and the Newberry ONE Institute for eLearning?

The hybrid model is the mode of instruction that all full-time Pre-K-12 District students who choose Option 1 will be involved in at the beginning of the 2020-21 school year. Students participating in the hybrid model will have three virtual learning days per week. These days will NOT consist of live-streamed content from teachers or class meetings. Students will work on assignments posted in Schoology at their own pace on these days.

The Newberry ONE Institute for eLearning (Option 2) is also a Pre-K-12 public school option in the School District of Newberry County. Newberry ONE serves Newberry County residents, and these students take classes full time. Students receive remote instruction from District teachers using high-quality course materials and will follow a standard school schedule. They will also maintain their enrollment status at their zoned school of attendance and will be permitted to return to those schools for the 2021-22 school year. Students may reapply to their zoned school of attendance after the first semester of the 2020-21 school year and will be admitted on a space-available basis.

Both options are delivered by highly-qualified, certified teachers who work for the School District of Newberry County. Both also use the Schoology LMS.

How is the District addressing the digital divide and connectivity issues to reach all children?

The District is working on various solutions to assist students in getting connected to the Internet, including providing 24-hour Wi-Fi access at school campuses and exploring opportunities to place Wi-Fi-enabled school buses in neighborhoods lacking internet access. The District is also working closely with the SC Dept. of Education on procuring MiFi devices for students in need who qualify.

How should parents support their child's learning at home?

- Ensure that their child has access to the District-issued device and Internet access (if needed) to complete school work.
- Monitor District communications for up-to-date information regarding distance learning resources. If you are not receiving emails or calls, call your school to make sure your contact information is up to date.
- Ensure that your children know their usernames and passwords for instructional resources and encourage their participation in distance learning offerings and instructional applications.
- Maintain communication with your children's teachers and school counselor(s).
- Engage your children in conversations regarding assignments.
- Monitor time spent engaging in online and offline learning.
- Support your children's emotional balance by providing time for physical activity and play.
- Take an interest in your child's school work and have discussions about it.

Specific Information Regarding Newberry ONE Institute for eLearning – Option 2

Although classes will be held in an eLearning model, they will continue to follow a regular school schedule as closely as possible and instruction will be live. Daily routines should mirror that of a traditional in-class setting. This includes instruction in each subject, related arts/electives*, and interventions. Please understand that this option is live and will follow a regular, daily school schedule as it would at a brick-and-mortar school. While students can complete some assignments and other activities on their own schedule, they will need to log in and be present for live classes between the hours of 8:00 am and 2:45 pm. Breaks for independent work time, lunch, etc., will be provided throughout the day. Parents are not expected to actively participate in these daily sessions with their children. However, those who choose this option are responsible for ensuring that their children have adequate supervision during this time.

*The District will strive to offer as many courses beyond the four standard core course offerings of ELA, math, science, and social studies. However, there is no guarantee that all course offerings at the zoned schools of attendance can be provided via this option. Students may be able to enroll in coursework not available via Newberry ONE on campus, if space allows. eLearning will not only include live instruction via Schoology, as mentioned above, but also small groups or one-on-one instruction, independent work, assignments, and assessments. There will be no paper packets distributed like there were in the spring of 2020. Teachers will be trained in online platforms and virtual instruction.

Attendance, Daily Agenda, and Behavior: Students are to attend class every day school is in session and during the scheduled time. Attendance will be taken daily and recorded in the student information system (PowerSchool). Students must be on time for each class or they will be marked tardy.

Teachers will create and post a daily agenda to outline the lessons for the day/class. Whenever possible, lessons will follow the prescribed schedule of learning to meet the SC standards and District expectations.

Assignments, workload, and office hours: Students will have a minimum of 24 hours to complete all assignments. Lessons may be recorded so that students can refer back to the lessons for assistance in completing the lessons. Grading will follow the District grading guidelines and policies.

Teachers will also hold office hours each day to meet with students and perform administrative duties.

Although a commitment for the entire year is strongly recommended, students must commit to at least one semester in the Newberry ONE Institute for eLearning (students may re-apply to return to their zoned school at the end of first semester and will be readmitted if space is available).

My child is in the Montessori program. Can he/she do Newberry ONE?

Due to the nature of and methods used in the Montessori program, it is not compatible with a completely online format. Students currently enrolled in one of our schools' Montessori programs can choose Newberry ONE, but they will have a "traditional" classroom experience and will not have a teacher trained in the Montessori method. However, students who choose Newberry ONE for the 2020-21 school year will NOT lose their Montessori slot when they return to school for the 2021-22 school year.

How will my child's IEP be met in this eLearning environment?

IEP meetings can be held virtually if not safe to do so in person. Families will be supported via email, phone, and online platforms, and feedback will be provided to students. Special services

staff will establish a distance learning plan, provide live services via online platforms and inclusive services, as well as provide lessons and activities posted in Schoology.

How will English learners be accommodated in this eLearning environment?

English learners will continue to have access to standards-based instruction in Newberry ONE, and ESOL teachers and content area teachers will provide services and instructional modifications to identified students based on individual plans. Students will also have access to the Imagine Language and Literacy program on their devices in order to continue to foster English language acquisition.

Will the lessons be pre-recorded for the Newberry ONE Institute for eLearning, and will students be allowed to watch at their leisure? What about the hybrid model?

With the exception of Pre-Kindergarten (4K), lessons will be live-streamed for Newberry ONE participants, so reliable Internet access is required. Students participating in the hybrid model will not have lessons live streamed and will instead work on content posted by their teachers in the LMS.

Will GT services still be provided to elementary students?

Yes. The William and Mary and M Cubed programs will be used.

Are there any fees for Newberry ONE?

Students will pay fees according to the district fee schedule (same as fees for brick-and-mortar students). High school students who enroll in specialized courses, such as NCCC classes, will pay applicable fees as noted in the school handbook.

Will classes be leveled?

Yes, classes will be leveled for both honors and college-preparatory levels. Dual-credit and AP classes may not be offered on the platform if enrollment isn't high enough. However, students may be able to take these courses on campus.

What if my child attends the Newberry County Career Center?

Students who attend NCCC and wish to enroll in Newberry ONE may have to take their courses on site at the NCCC.

What will the average class size be?

Class sizes will be comparable to those at the home, brick-and-mortar schools.

In addition to reliable Internet access, will students also be required to have and use webcams during daily classes (e.g., to ensure attendance; as a classroom management and engagement tool)?

The webcam included on the student's device will serve this purpose.

Other important information:

- Students must have reliable Internet service to successfully participate.
- Participating students may not necessarily be assigned to teachers from their zoned schools of attendance.
- Meals will be made available for pickup.
- Students will be able to participate in any extracurricular activities offered by the district.
- Please note that Pre-Kindergarten (4K) will NOT be synchronous instruction. Students will have instructional applications on their devices to use. In addition, Pre-K teachers at each home school will provide activities, videos, etc., on the LMS. Where appropriate, hands-on materials will also be available for pickup to supplement the online materials.