

**CHOCTAW COUNTY
BOARD OF EDUCATION**



**COVID-19
REOPENING OF SCHOOLS PLAN**

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Message From the Superintendent of Education

Mrs. Dorothy Banks

The outbreak of the Coronavirus has become seemingly one of the most difficult thought processes of my educational/administrative career. There are no perfect solutions to moving forward in the process of educating our students during this pandemic. Everyone is going to have their opinion of what we should or should not do in this process. However, when we make suggestions or give our opinions, we must also come up with viable solutions. This is not a simple process, in actuality it has been very painstaking. Much energy and thought has been put forth in regard to having a smooth, safe, school opening that will lead to a safe and enriching school year.

The 2020-2021 COVID-19 Reopening of Schools Plan, that you are viewing, is a living document, and there are changes that will be made throughout the school term. We are all in this together; therefore, I am soliciting your support and thoughts to help ensure the health and safety of everyone involved. During the course of the year, we will make changes due to things that we didn't consider, due to things that aren't working as we suspected, due to governmental and health mandates, and also due to just good common sense.

To help better serve our students, we will be offering face-to-face/traditional instruction or virtual instruction. In our traditional program, teachers will use blended instruction, in which face-to-face and remote learning are combined. In the event, students are not physically able to attend class for a period of time, they will continue learning through a combination of face-to-face and remote learning. The student will still remain assigned to their home school and return when able. Attendance will be recorded and coded according to appropriate codes in the student information system and Board policy. In addition, we will also offer a program that is fully online. All students who choose this option will receive virtual instruction at home. Students in virtual school can participate in extracurricular activities at their schools. Also, they are able to graduate and receive honors through their schools. Students who choose the virtual school option can only switch to face-to-face classes at the end of a nine week grading period. Attendance will be handled according to Board policy and should be monitored through participation in meetings, assignment submissions, and digital communication platforms. A virtual school application has been developed and is currently available to parents. Students who choose the fully virtual option will not be affected by the Phases contained within this plan. The deadline for completing the application for virtual school is July 31, 2020.

Currently, all schools in the Choctaw County School System will open for students on Monday, August 10, 2020, regardless of whether you choose the traditional or virtual option. Once again, it will take all of us working as a collective unit to ensure that our students are kept safe and that they are receiving the quality education to which they are entitled.

2020-2021 SCHOOL CALENDAR

Choctaw County Schools 2020-2021 School Year

First Semester

DATE	STUDENT CALENDAR	DAY OF WEEK
August 4, 2020	Professional Development Day	Tuesday
August 5, 2020	Professional Development Day	Wednesday
August 6, 2020	Professional Development Day	Thursday
August 7, 2020	Teacher Institute	Friday
August 10, 2020	First Day of School for Students	Monday
September 7, 2020	Labor Day	Monday
October 12, 2020	Professional Development Day	Monday
November 11, 2020	Veteran's Day	Wednesday
November 23-27, 2020	Thanksgiving Holidays	Monday-Friday
December 18, 2020	Christmas Holidays Begin at 3:00 p.m.	Friday

Second Semester

DATE	STUDENT CALENDAR	DAY OF WEEK
January 4, 2021	Professional Development Day	Monday
January 5, 2021	Students Return	Tuesday
January 18, 2021	Martin Luther King Day	Monday
February 15-16, 2021	Mini Break	Monday-Tuesday
March 11, 2021	Students Dismiss at 12:00 p.m.	Thursday
March 22-26, 2021	Spring Break	Monday-Friday
April 2, 2021	Good Friday	Friday
May 26, 2021	Student's Last Day at 3:00 p.m.	Wednesday
May 27, 2021	Teacher's Last Day	Thursday
May 31, 2021	Memorial Day	Monday

REPORTING PERIODS			REPORT CARDS	PROGRESS REPORTS		
8/10/2020	10/8/2020	43	10/15/2020	8/10/2020	9/9/2020	22
10/9/2020	12/18/2020	44	1/7/2021	10/9/2020	11/10/2020	22
1/5/2021	3/12/2021	46	3/18/2021	1/5/2021	2/5/2021	23
3/15/2021	5/26/2021	47	5/28/2021	3/15/2021	4/24/2021	23

GRADUATION AND PROMOTION DATES

SCHOOL	DATE
Southern Choctaw High School	Thursday, May 20, 2021
Choctaw County High School	Friday, May 21, 2021
Southern Choctaw Elementary School	Monday, May 24, 2021
Choctaw County Elementary School	Tuesday, May 25, 2021

Approved by Board on April 14, 2020

INTRODUCTION TO THE PLAN

Families will have two learning options:

1. **Face-to-Face Learning:** Teachers will use blended instruction, in which face-to-face and remote learning are combined. Students who cannot attend physical class for a period of time will continue learning through a combination of face-to-face and remote learning. They remain assigned to their home school and will return when able. Attendance will be recorded and coded according to appropriate codes in the student information system and Board policy.

1. **Virtual School:** Choctaw County Schools will offer a program that is fully online, and all students who choose this option will receive virtual instruction. Students in virtual school can participate in extracurricular activities at their schools. Also, they are able to graduate and receive honors through their schools. Students who choose the virtual school option can only switch to face-to-face classes at the end of a nine week grading period. Depending on the number of students who choose the virtual option, instruction for virtual students may be provided by teachers hired specifically for virtual instruction, or teachers may be offered after-school positions to provide instruction for virtual students in their classes. Attendance will be handled according to Board policy and should be monitored through participation in meetings, assignment submissions, and digital communication platforms. A virtual school application has been developed and will be available to parents. **Students who choose the fully virtual option will not be affected by the Phases laid out in this plan. They will not attend face-to-face classes during the school day. The deadline for completing the application for virtual school is July 31, 2020.**

2. **Advantages of Face-to-Face Learning with Blended Instruction:**
 - a. Can shift seamlessly to fully remote learning in response to possible school closures
 - b. Supports students with greater opportunities for differentiation, tiered instruction, and feedback
 - c. Supports students and families with equity and health issues

3. **Students who choose the fully virtual option will not be affected by the Phases laid out in this plan. They will not attend face-to-face classes during the school day. The deadline for completing the application for virtual school is July 31, 2020.**

COVID-19 RISK INDICATOR

LOW RISK	MODERATE RISK	HIGH RISK	VERY HIGH RISK
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As of July 20, 2020, Choctaw County has been categorized in the very high risk phase.

Green - Low Risk

- Continue social distancing at work and wear face coverings at work when social distancing is impossible.
- Large gatherings and venues are allowed with increased hygiene measures, physical distancing, face coverings and symptom monitoring.
- Check for fever, coughing or other symptoms of COVID-19 before team sports or practices.
- Stay home if sick.
- Places of worship are encouraged to consider social distancing, hygiene measures and face coverings.
- Children should follow hygiene measures, physical distancing, wear face coverings and monitoring for symptoms are encouraged for all group gatherings.

Yellow – Moderate Risk

- Avoid groups of more than 50 people.
- Keep 6-foot distances from people outside your household in theaters and other entertainment venues.
- Check for fever, coughing or other symptoms of COVID-19 before team games or practices.
- Hold online worship services if possible. When meeting in person, keep 6-foot distances between people of different households; consider holding more services for lower attendance, and more spacing between people.
- Children should keep a 6-foot distance from others outside their household, those with symptoms of COVID-19 should stay home from school or child care, limit interaction between children at playgrounds and other public places.

Orange – High Risk

- Continue social distancing at work, work from home when possible, and wear face coverings at work when social distancing is impossible.
- Limit out-of-state travel.
- Takeout, pickup or delivery from restaurants is encouraged rather than dining in.
- Maintain social distancing during outdoor recreation.

- Hold online workshop services if possible. When meeting in person, keep 6-foot distances between people of different households, consider holding more services for lower attendance, and more spacing between people at each service.
- Keep children away from in-person playdates or similar activities outside of the school setting if avoidable and do not allow children on public playgrounds.

Red – Very High Risk

- Wear face coverings where other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain.
- Even when visiting family or friends, wear face coverings when within 6 feet of people outside your household.
- Avoid all unnecessary travel. If you must travel, avoid crowded areas if possible.
- Telework if possible. If not, maintain a 6-foot distance from others and wear face coverings at work.
- Takeout, pickup or delivery from restaurants is strongly encouraged rather than dining in.
- Avoid groups of more than 20 people.
- Avoid unnecessary visits to hospitals, nursing homes or other residential care facilities.
- Worship online or keep 6-foot distances between people of different households.
- Children with COVID-19 should stay home or be sent home for school or child care if showing symptoms. Limit public interaction between children and do not allow children on public playgrounds.

OPERATIONS

Phase 1 (Full Opening -- Monday through Friday, Face-to-Face Instruction)

Transportation

- Parents will be notified that they will be required to check and verify temperatures at home before sending students to school. They will be required to sign and return the Acknowledgement of Responsibilities. Based on the CDC guideline temperature should be less than 100.4° F. Any student at or above 100.4° F should remain at home and contact their health care provider.
- Parents that can transport their children to and from school are encouraged to do so.
- All employees should follow the same guideline before reporting to work.
- If a student is displaying symptoms of sickness they will be placed in a designated area on the school bus. Upon arrival at the school they will be transitioned to a designated location and parent or guardian will be notified.
- Bus drivers will be required to wear masks, shields, and gloves.
- Buses will display clearly visible signage to communicate the symptoms students should not have if traveling on the school bus.
- All students will be required to wear masks. They may also wear a face shield in addition to the mask.
- Drivers will have a minimum amount of masks available.
- Buses will load from the back first by family. Students from the same household will sit together. Social guidelines will be met with one seat between passengers.
- Buses will unload from front to back.
- Buses will be sanitized after each trip (twice a day).

Building Entrance

- All locations will be equipped with Body Temperature Scanners.
- Sanitizing stations will be located in designated locations throughout the buildings.
 - Entrance
 - Hallways
 - Cafeteria
 - Gym
 - Ensure all classrooms have hand sanitizer available.
- Bottle filling stations will be provided throughout the buildings.

Breakfast/Lunch

- Students will pick up Grab Bags and take them to the classroom as they enter the school in the morning.

- Optional: Mark seating for social distancing for those that want to eat breakfast and allow them to eat in the cafeteria.
- Those not eating breakfast will go directly to the classroom.
- Establish a path that allows students to loop through the cafeteria to allow adequate traffic flow and keep students out of the hall.
- Cafeteria workers will wear gloves, masks and face shields.

Classrooms

- Bell schedule will be adjusted to accommodate social distancing.
- Provide classroom speakers for teachers as needed. (small speakers that hang around the neck)
- Students will change classes while observing social distancing guidelines.
- Hallways will be marked for social distancing.
- All students and staff will be required to wear masks all day. Face shields will be required for identified staff and students as needed.
- Staff will be responsible for sanitizing their room/work area at the end of the day and/or as they change classes throughout the day.
- Classrooms will be equipped with plexiglass mounted to the student desks.

Computer Labs

- Computer labs will be equipped with plexiglass between each computer workstation.
- Students and staff will wear masks (optional face shields) and sanitizer will be available.
- Staff will be responsible for making sure the computer lab is sanitized after each use.

Physical Education

- All students will continue to wear their masks and practice social distancing.
- Automatic tissue and soap dispensers will be purchased for the bathrooms.
- Sanitizing stations will also be available.
- As an option to meet social distancing guidelines - split class to allow half the students to participate in instructional component and the other half participate in activities and switch during the period.

Break/Recess

- Snacks delivered to classrooms. Building administrators will determine location for consumption.
- Designated break areas are set and communicated to staff by building administrators.
- Ensure students are properly sanitizing and washing hands before they enter the buildings and/or return to classrooms.
- Wear masks and practice social distancing.
- Bathrooms will be monitored by custodial staff throughout the day.
 - Designated bathroom times (elementary schools) will be set and communicated to custodial staff, allowing them to monitor and ensure proper sanitizing and cleanliness of

the bathrooms after each class. Any problems will be communicated to teachers. Teachers should talk with their class and ensure they are not leaving the bathrooms in a mess.

Libraries

- Follow social distancing guidelines, wear masks, and sanitizing station available.
- Mark floor for social distancing.
- Plexiglass for computers workstations in the library.
- Librarians are responsible for ensuring the library is properly sanitized throughout the day and/or after each class.

Extracurricular Activities

- Follow Alabama High School Athletic Association Guidelines for COVID-19.

Clubs/Organizations

- Practice social distancing, wear masks, and ensure proper sanitizing procedures are followed by all staff and students.
- Follow state guidelines and provide written plans to the building administrator and/or program coordinator outlining how you plan to meet CDC guidelines while meetings and/or activities are taking place.
- Transportation:
 - Organization must provide to the transportation department the number of students to be transported. If possible provide count by bus stop/drop off location.
 - Buses will be loaded based on the first stop/drop off location.
 - The same transportation guidelines previously listed for the school day will be followed.

Alternative Setting

- Practice social distancing, wear masks, and ensure proper sanitizing procedures are followed by students.
- All students entering the alternative setting classroom will have their temperature taken before entering the classroom. Any student with a temperature at or above 100.4° F will be sent home.
- Lunch and breakfast will be delivered to the classroom.
- Plexiglass will be installed as needed on student desks.
- Staff will be responsible for making sure the classroom is properly sanitized at the end of the day.

Special Needs/Services

- If a parent provides documentation indicating a child should not return to school, an alternative virtual school option will be provided.
- All buses will be equipped with thermometers. Parents will be required to check and verify temperatures at home before sending and/or bringing students to school. Any student at or above 100.4° F should remain at home and contact their health care provider.

- Bus drivers will be required to wear masks, face shields, and gloves. All students will be required to wear masks unless documentation from their doctor indicates otherwise.
- Lunch and breakfast will be delivered to the classroom.
- Plexiglass will be installed as needed.

Isolation Areas

- School staff/nurses will identify an isolation room/area.
- Establish procedures for pick-up or transport if COVID-19 symptoms present themselves.
- Train staff on safety protocols.

Phase 2 (Blended Opening -- Face-to-Face Instruction and Remote Learning)

Transportation

- Parents will be notified that they will be required to check and verify temperatures at home before sending students to school. They will be required to sign and return the Acknowledgement of Responsibilities. Based on the CDC guideline temperature should be less than 100.4° F. Any student at or above 100.4° F should remain at home and contact their health care provider.
- Parents that can transport their children to and from school are encouraged to do so.
- All employees should follow the same guideline before reporting to work.
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- Staff will be responsible for sanitizing their room/work area at the end of the day and/or as they change classes throughout the day.
- Classrooms will be equipped with plexiglass mounted to the student desks.

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- Computer labs will be equipped with plexiglass between each computer workstation.
- Students and staff will wear masks (optional face shields) and sanitizer will be available.
- Staff will be responsible for making sure the computer lab is sanitized after each use.

Physical Education

- All students will continue to wear their masks and practice social distancing.
- Automatic tissue and soap dispensers will be purchased for the bathrooms.
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- Designated break areas are set and communicated to staff by building administrators.
- Ensure students are properly sanitizing and washing hands before they enter the buildings and/or return to classrooms.
- Wear masks and practice social distancing.
- Bathrooms will be monitored by custodial staff throughout the day.
 - Designated bathroom times (elementary schools) will be set and communicated to custodial staff, allowing them to monitor and ensure proper sanitizing and cleanliness of the bathrooms after each class. Any problems will be communicated to teachers. Teachers should talk with their class and ensure they are not leaving the bathrooms in a mess.

Libraries

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Clubs/Organizations

- Practice social distancing, wear masks, and ensure proper sanitizing procedures are followed by all staff and students.
- Follow state guidelines and provide written plans to the building administrator and/or program coordinator outlining how you plan to meet CDC guidelines while meetings and/or activities are taking place.
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 - Organization must provide to the transportation department the number of students to be transported. If possible provide count by bus stop/drop off location.
 - Buses will be loaded based on the first stop/drop off location.
 - The same transportation guidelines previously listed for the school day will be followed.

Alternative Setting

- Practice social distancing, wear masks, and ensure proper sanitizing procedures are followed by students.
- All students entering the alternative setting classroom will have their temperature taken before entering the classroom. Any student with a temperature at or above 100.4° F will be sent home.
- Lunch and breakfast will be delivered to the classroom.
- Plexiglass will be installed as needed on student desks.
- Staff will be responsible for making sure the classroom is properly sanitized at the end of the day.

Special Needs/Services

- If a parent provides documentation indicating a child should not return to school, an alternative virtual school option will be provided.
- All buses will be equipped with thermometers. Parents will be required to check and verify temperatures at home before sending and/or bringing students to school. Any student at or above 100.4° F should remain at home and contact their health care provider.
- Bus drivers will be required to wear masks, face shields, and gloves. All students will be required to wear masks unless documentation from their doctor indicates otherwise.
- Lunch and breakfast will be delivered to the classroom.
- Plexiglass will be installed as needed.

Isolation Areas

- School staff/nurses will identify an isolation room/area.
- Establish procedures for pick-up or transport if COVID-19 symptoms present themselves.
- Train staff on safety protocols.

Phase 3 (Remote Learning -- At-Home Learning)

Not Applicable

PERSONNEL

We look forward to the return of our students, faculty, and staff, and we value the safety and security of everyone on our campuses. We are putting measures in place to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 at our schools. Below is a list of employee protective measures that we have put in place:

Employee Protective Measures Overview

- Employees are required to wear a mask.
- We encourage respiratory etiquette, including covering coughs and sneezes.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water. Sanitizer will be provided in each classroom for use.
- Additional cleaning measures have been put in place to routinely clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces daily.
- Schools shall take reasonable steps, where practicable, to maintain six feet of separation between persons of different households.
- Sanitizing stations will be set up at the entrance of all schools and throughout the buildings.
- Do not report to work if you are sick with a fever, experiencing COVID-19 related symptoms, or have been exposed to someone who has tested positive for COVID-19.*

Although some of the protective measures above are strongly encouraged, others are mandatory such as not reporting to work if sick with a fever or experiencing COVID-19 related symptoms. Prior to reporting to work each day, we ask that employees complete an at home self- assessment.

Home Self-Assessment: Faculty, staff, and students (parents) should conduct symptom screening and confirm temperature is below 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit. Stay home for symptoms consistent with COVID-19 or if you have been in close contact with a person diagnosed with COVID-19 and contact your health care provider for further guidance. COVID-19 has a wide range of symptoms ranging from mild to severe illness and symptoms may include (*):

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting

- Diarrhea

*This list does not include all possible symptoms. CDC will continue to update this list as they learn more about COVID-19.

Active Screening: If COVID-19 symptoms are present when entering the school building, the use of a non-touch thermometer will be used to check temperature, employee will be asked about COVID-19 symptoms within the last 24 hours, and whether anyone in their home has had COVID-19 symptoms or a positive test.

- Sick employees will be advised not to return until they have met CDC's criteria to discontinue home isolation and quarantine or been given a medical excuse to return to work from a health care provider.
- An isolation area will be identified at each school for sick employees or students and the area will be properly cleaned and disinfected after each use.
- The school nurse at each school will be responsible for responding to COVID-19 concerns.

Phase 1 (Full Opening -- Monday through Friday, Face-to-Face Instruction)

- All staff will report to school at their regularly scheduled times. Staff have the option of clocking in from the time clock or from their computers (clock in is available using any electronic device in which connectivity is through the district's network). The tardy policy will be in full effect. It is recommended that a sanitizing station be placed near each time clock.
- Proper social distancing will be maintained. Employees will not be allowed to congregate while planning and preparing for instruction.

Phase 2 (Blended Opening -- Face-to-Face Instruction and Remote Learning)

- All staff will report to school at their regularly scheduled times. Staff have the option of clocking in from the time clock or from their computers (clock in is available using any electronic device in which connectivity is through the district's network). The tardy policy will be in full effect. It is recommended that a sanitizing station be placed near each time clock.
- Proper social distancing will be maintained. Employees will not be allowed to congregate while planning and preparing for instruction.

Phase 3 (Remote Learning -- At-Home Learning)

- All staff will report to school at their regularly scheduled times. Staff have the option of clocking in from the time clock or from their computers (clock in is available using any electronic device

in which connectivity is through the district's network). The tardy policy will be in full effect. It is recommended that a sanitizing station be placed near each time clock.

- Proper social distancing will be maintained. Employees will not be allowed to congregate while planning and preparing for instruction.
- Different assignments will be made for non-instructional staff.

COVID-19 and the American Workplace

On April 1, 2020, the U.S. Department of Labor announced new action regarding how American workers and employers will benefit from the protections and relief offered by the Emergency Paid Sick Leave Act and Emergency Family and Medical Leave Expansion Act, both part of the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA). The Department's Wage and Hour Division (WHD) posted a temporary rule issuing regulations pursuant to this new law, effective April 1, 2020. For more information, see <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/ffcra>.

Families First Coronavirus Response Act: Employee Paid Leave Rights

The **Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA or Act)** requires certain employers to provide employees with paid sick leave or expanded family and medical leave for specified reasons related to COVID-19. The Department of Labor's (Department) Wage and Hour Division (WHD) administers and enforces the new law's paid leave requirements. These provisions will apply from the effective date through December 31, 2020.

Generally, the Act provides that employees of covered employers are eligible for:

- *Two weeks (up to 80 hours) of **paid sick leave** at the employee's regular rate of pay where the employee is unable to work because the employee is quarantined (pursuant to Federal, State, or local government order or advice of a healthcare provider), and/or experiencing COVID-19 symptoms and seeking a medical diagnosis; or*
- *Two weeks (up to 80 hours) of **paid sick leave** at two-thirds the employee's regular rate of pay because the employee is unable to work because of a bona fide need to care for an individual subject to quarantine (pursuant to Federal, State, or local government order or advice of a healthcare provider), or to care for a child (under 18 years of age) whose school or child care provider is closed or unavailable for reasons related to COVID-19, and/or the employee is experiencing a substantially similar condition as specified by the Secretary of Health and Human Services, in consultation with the Secretaries of the Treasury and Labor; and*
- *Up to an additional 10 weeks of **paid expanded family and medical leave** at two-thirds the employee's regular rate of pay where an employee, who has been employed for at least 30 calendar days, is unable to work due to a bona fide need for leave to care for a child whose school or child care provider is closed or unavailable for reasons related to COVID-19.*

Eligible Employees: *All employees of covered employers are eligible for two weeks of paid sick time for specified reasons related to COVID-19. Employees employed for at least 30 days are eligible for up to an additional 10 weeks of paid family leave to care for a child under certain circumstances related to COVID-19.*

Notice: Where leave is foreseeable, an employee should provide notice of leave to the employer as is

practicable. After the first workday of paid sick time, an employer may require employees to follow reasonable notice procedures in order to continue receiving paid sick time. Paid sick time is cumulative and will be tracked by the Human Resource Director.

Qualifying Reasons for Leave:

Under the FFCRA, an employee qualifies for paid sick time if the employee is unable to work (**or unable to telework**) due to a need for leave because the employee:

1. is subject to a Federal, State, or local quarantine or isolation order related to COVID-19;
2. has been advised by a health care provider to self-quarantine related to COVID-19;
3. is experiencing COVID-19 symptoms and is seeking a medical diagnosis;
4. is caring for an individual subject to an order described in (1) or self-quarantine as described in (2);
5. is caring for a child whose school or place of care is closed (or child care provider is unavailable) for reasons related to COVID-19; or
6. is experiencing any other substantially-similar condition specified by the Secretary of Health and Human Services, in consultation with the Secretaries of Labor and Treasury.

Under the FFCRA, an employee qualifies for expanded family leave if the employee is caring for a child whose school or place of care is closed (or child care provider is unavailable) for reasons related to COVID-19.

Duration of Leave:

For reasons (1)-(4) and (6): A full-time employee is eligible for 80 hours of leave, and a part-time employee is eligible for the number of hours of leave that the employee works on average over a two-week period.

For reason (5): A full-time employee is eligible for up to 12 weeks of leave (two weeks of paid sick leave followed by up to 10 weeks of paid expanded family & medical leave) at 40 hours a week, and a part-time employee is eligible for leave for the number of hours that the employee is normally scheduled to work over that period.

Calculation of Pay:

For leave reasons (1), (2), or (3): employees taking leave are entitled to pay at either their regular rate or the applicable minimum wage, whichever is higher, up to \$511 per day and \$5,110 in the aggregate (over a 2-week period).

For leave reasons (4) or (6): employees taking leave are entitled to pay at 2/3 their regular rate or 2/3 the applicable minimum wage, whichever is higher, up to \$200 per day and \$2,000 in the aggregate (over a

2-week period).

For leave reason (5): employees taking leave are entitled to pay at 2/3 their regular rate or 2/3 the applicable minimum wage, whichever is higher, up to \$200 per day and \$12,000 in the aggregate (over a 12-week period).

Q & A

Which employees are covered by the FFCRA?

All full-time and part-time school system employees are covered by the Act and eligible for the 2 weeks of emergency paid sick leave if they meet the criteria noted in the table below. If an employee has been employed for more than 30 days, they are also entitled to the additional 10 weeks of leave under the Emergency FMLA related to childcare. Teleworking employees are not eligible for this leave unless they are ill or caring for someone impacted by COVID-19 and unable to work even from home.

When does this law become effective?

The provisions of the law become effective April 1, 2020, and expire on December 31, 2020.

Does an employee have to request this leave?

Yes.

EMERGENCY PAID SICK LEAVE & EMERGENCY FMLA LEAVE QUICK REFERENCE CHART					
Related to	Reason for Leave	Employee	Leave	Maximum Pay	Notes
Self	1-Subject to federal, state or local quarantine order	Full time or part time employee	Emergency Paid Sick Leave	100% pay for 10 work days up to \$511/day	As of April 1, there is no current federal, state or local quarantine that would apply in Alabama
	2-Advised to quarantine by health care provider	Full time or part time employee	Emergency Paid Sick Leave	100% pay for 10 work days up to \$511/day	

	3-Experiencing symptoms and seeking a diagnosis	Full time or part time employee	Emergency Paid Sick Leave	100% pay for 10 work days up to \$511/day	
Others	4-Caring for a person subject to quarantine order from govt. officials or health care provider	Full time or part time employee	Emergency Paid Sick Leave	67% pay for 10 work days up to \$200/day	As of April 1, there is no current federal, state or local quarantine that would apply in Alabama, but this reason still may apply if ordered by a healthcare provider.
	5-Caring for child whose school or daycare is closed	Full time or part time employee employed for at least 30 days	Emergency Paid Sick Leave	67% pay for 10 work days up to \$200/day	Total of 12 weeks; Applies only to children under the age of 18
			Emergency FMLA Leave	Additional 10 weeks up to \$200/day	
6-Experiencing similar condition as specified by HHS	Full time or part time employee	Emergency Paid Sick Leave	67% pay for 10 days up to \$200/day		

To summarize, if the leave is required based on the employee’s own health, they earn 100% of their pay for 2 weeks. If the leave is based on caring for another, they earn 67% of their pay for 2 weeks. Additional leave is available for childcare up to 10 weeks at 67% of their pay.

Can we ask for a doctor’s excuse?

Generally, yes, but be mindful of the difficulty employees may have getting a doctor’s excuse when health care providers are actively discouraging patients from coming to the doctor’s office. Employers should consider permitting employees’ certification that their request is for a reason permitted by law rather than mandating a doctor’s excuse.

Some have said they are too afraid to report to work due to fears of contracting COVID-19. Can they refuse? What if they have underlying health conditions or other concerns?

Generally, if the administration has directed certain employees to report to work, they must comply or

assume the same risk that they would normally have working in a school. If they are eligible, they can also apply for leave under the FFCRA or unpaid leave under the traditional FMLA.

What about the regular FMLA? Is that still available?

The regular provisions of the FMLA remain intact, including the 1,250 hours of employment requirement and the unpaid leave provisions.

What documents do I need to give my employer to get paid sick leave or expanded family and medical leave?

When requesting paid sick leave or expanded family and medical leave, you must provide your employer either orally or in writing the following information:

- Your name;
- The date(s) for which you request leave;
- The reason for leave; and
- A statement that you are unable to work because of the above reason.

If you request leave because you are subject to a quarantine or isolation order or to care for an individual subject to such an order, you should additionally provide the name of the government entity that issued the order. If you request leave to self-quarantine based on the advice of a health care provider or to care for an individual who is self-quarantining based on such advice, you should additionally provide the name of the health care provider who gave advice.

If you request leave to care for your child whose school or place of care is closed, or child care provider is unavailable, you must also provide:

- The name of your child;
- The name of the school, place of care, or child care provider that has closed or become unavailable; and
- A statement that no other suitable person is available to care for your child.

In addition to the above information, you must also provide your employer written documentation in support of your paid sick leave as specified in applicable IRS forms, instructions, and information.

Please also note that all existing certification requirements under the FMLA remain in effect if you are taking leave for one of the existing qualifying reasons under the FMLA. For example, if you are taking leave beyond the two weeks of emergency paid sick leave because your medical condition for COVID-19-related reasons rises to the level of a serious health condition, you must continue to provide medical certifications under the FMLA if required by your employer.

Do I qualify for leave for a COVID-19 related reason even if I have already used some or all of my

leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)?

If you are an eligible employee, you are entitled to paid sick leave under the Emergency Paid Sick Leave Act regardless of how much leave you have taken under the FMLA.

However, if your employer was covered by the FMLA prior to April 1, 2020, your eligibility for expanded family and medical leave depends on how much leave you have already taken during the 12-month period that your employer uses for FMLA leave. You may take a total of 12 workweeks for FMLA or expanded family and medical leave reasons during a 12-month period. If you have taken some, but not all, 12 workweeks of your leave under FMLA during the current 12-month period determined by your employer, you may take the remaining portion of leave available. If you have already taken 12 workweeks of FMLA leave during this 12-month period, you may not take additional expanded family and medical leave.

For example, assume you are eligible for pre-existing FMLA leave and took two weeks of such leave in January 2020 to undergo and recover from a surgical procedure. You therefore have 10 weeks of FMLA leave remaining. Because expanded family and medical leave is a type of FMLA leave, you would be entitled to take up to 10 weeks of expanded family and medical leave, rather than 12 weeks. And any expanded family and medical leave you take would count against your entitlement to pre-existing FMLA leave.

When am I eligible for paid sick leave to care for someone who is subject to a quarantine or isolation order?

You may take paid sick leave to care for an individual who, as a result of being subject to a quarantine or isolation order, is unable to care for him or herself and depends on you for care and if providing care prevents you from working and from teleworking.

Furthermore, you may only take paid sick leave to care for an individual who genuinely needs your care. Such an individual includes an immediate family member or someone who regularly resides in your home. You may also take paid sick leave to care for someone if your relationship creates an expectation that you would care for the person in a quarantine or self-quarantine situation, and that individual depends on you for care during the quarantine or self-quarantine.

You may not take paid sick leave to care for someone with whom you have no relationship. Nor can you take paid sick leave to care for someone who does not expect or depend on your care during his or her quarantine or self-quarantine.

Can I take paid sick leave to care for any individual who is subject to a quarantine or isolation order or who has been advised to self-quarantine?

No. You may take paid sick leave under the FFCRA to care for an immediate family member or someone

who regularly resides in your home. You may also take paid sick leave under the FFCRA to care for someone where your relationship creates an expectation that you care for the person in a quarantine or self-quarantine situation, and that individual depends on you for care during the quarantine or self-quarantine.

However, you may not take paid sick leave under the FFCRA to care for someone with whom you have no relationship. Nor can you take paid sick leave under the FFCRA to care for someone who does not expect or depend on your care during his or her quarantine or self-quarantine due to COVID-19.

May I take paid sick leave or expanded family and medical leave to care for my child who is 18 years old or older?

It depends. Under the FFCRA, paid sick leave and expanded family and medical leave include leave to care for one (or more) of your children when his or her school or place of care is closed or child care provider is unavailable, due to COVID-19 related reasons. This leave may only be taken to care for your non-disabled child if he or she is under the age of 18. If your child is 18 years of age or older with a disability and cannot care for him or herself due to that disability, you may take paid sick leave and expanded family and medical leave to care for him or her if his or her school or place of care is closed or his or her child care provider is unavailable, due to COVID-19 related reasons, and you are unable to work or telework as a result.

In addition, paid sick leave is available to care for an individual who is subject to a Federal, State, or local quarantine or isolation order related to COVID-19 or has been advised by a health care provider to self-quarantine due to concerns related to COVID-19. If you have a need to care for your child age 18 or older who needs care for these circumstances, you may take paid sick leave if you are unable to work or telework as a result of providing care. But in no event may your total paid sick leave exceed two weeks.

People with COVID-19 have had a wide range of symptoms reported – ranging from mild symptoms to severe illness. Symptoms may appear **2-14 days after exposure to the virus**. People with these symptoms may have COVID-19:

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting

- Diarrhea

This list does not include all possible symptoms. CDC will continue to update this list as we learn more about COVID-19.

How do I know if I need to be in isolation or quarantine?

Isolation

If you have been diagnosed with COVID-19, are waiting for test results, or have fever, chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, or diarrhea, isolate yourself from others. Stay home until it is safe to be around others. If you live with others, stay in a specific “sick room” or area and away from other people or animals, including pets. Use a separate bathroom, if available.

Quarantine

If you feel healthy but recently had close contact (less than 6 feet apart, for more than 15 minutes) with a person with COVID-19, stay home and monitor your health. Stay home until 14 days after your last exposure. Check your temperature twice a day and watch for symptoms of COVID-19. If possible, stay away from people who are at higher-risk for getting very sick from COVID-19.

CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

Families will have two learning options:

1. **Face-to Face Learning:** Teachers will use blended instruction, in which face-to-face and remote learning are combined. Students that cannot attend physical class for a period of time will continue learning through a combination of face-to-face and remote learning. They remain assigned to their home school and will return when able. Attendance will be recorded and coded according to appropriate codes in the student information system and Board policy.
2. **Virtual Learning:** Choctaw County Schools will offer a program that is fully online, and all students who choose this option will receive virtual instruction. Students in virtual school can participate in extracurricular activities at their schools. Also, they are able to graduate and receive honors through their schools. Students who choose the virtual school option can only switch to face-to-face classes at the end of a nine week grading period. Depending on the number of students who choose the virtual option, instruction for virtual students may be provided by teachers hired specifically for virtual instruction, or teachers may be offered after-school positions to provide instruction for virtual students in their classes. Attendance will be handled according to Board policy and should be monitored through participation in online class meetings, assignment submissions, and digital communication platforms. A virtual school application has been developed and will be available to parents. **Students who choose the virtual option will not be affected by the Phases laid out in this plan.**

Advantages of Face-to-Face Learning with Blended Instruction:

- a. Can shift seamlessly to fully remote learning in response to possible school closures
- b. Supports students with greater opportunities for differentiation, tiered instruction, and feedback
- c. Supports students and families with equity and health issues

Phase 1 (Full Opening -- Monday through Friday, Face-to-Face Instruction)

1. Blended learning with Google Classroom, state- and teacher- provided courses and content, and various instructional technologies: (ViewSonic interactive boards for videoing lessons; instructional content, activities, and assignments posted online). Face-to-face instruction time is used to facilitate, remediate, enrich, and deliver tiered instruction. Because we can expect many extended absences for sickness and may face another school closure in the fall/winter, pushing out all coursework/instructional material in an online platform from the beginning of school will facilitate any transitions in learning environments and will help alleviate problems. Training for blended learning strategies and techniques will be provided in small groups during the first few

weeks of school. Teachers should introduce students and parents to Google Classroom and applicable communication platforms during instruction and parent meetings the first few weeks of school. At the very minimum, teachers should utilize blended lessons at least one day per week beginning after the Labor Day holiday.

2. Schools will utilize all current instructional programs with online components (iReady, Reading Horizons, Edmentum, Accelerated Reader).
3. Learning gaps: early skills assessment and progress monitoring through various assessment programs for each K-8 grade level to determine instructional need. 9-12 teachers will assess course standards and track progress toward learning goals using the critical standards and accompanying proficiency scales for each grade level and subject area as well as available formative assessments (see Roadmap for Reopening Schools).
<https://www.alsde.edu/Documents/Roadmap%20for%20Reopening%20Schools%20June%2026%202020.pdf>
4. Assessments: students experiencing extended absences or participating in the virtual school option must participate in required state and local assessments. These will be scheduled on the basis of individual need and available personnel. All Literacy Act requirements are in effect for K-3 students.
<https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1E57yJgREObQRkXIXG4TvKO2jHy9Qaun6tbznwDXug8s/edit?usp=sharing>
5. Equity: although paper packets will be made available if special needs/services and equity/access issues require them, online learning will result in greater learning outcomes for all students and is preferred. Administrators and teachers should take all measures to encourage all students and families to participate in online learning.
6. Physical Education: All students will continue to wear their masks and/or face shields and practice social distancing. Automatic tissue and soap dispensers will be purchased for the bathrooms/locker rooms. Sanitizing stations will also be available. As an option to meet social distancing guidelines - split class to allow half the students to participate in instructional component and the other half participate in activities and switch during the period.

Phase 2 (Blended Opening -- Face-to-Face Instruction and Remote Learning)

Same as above with the following adjustments:

1. In the event that we need to transition to a blended schedule for social distancing and safety of students and employees, the online learning plan would already be in place and familiar to students.

2. Employees follow normal work schedules.
3. Divide students into Cohort A and Cohort B. Cohort A students attend face to face school on M/T and have remote learning days on W/Th/F. Cohort B students will attend face to face school on Th/F and have remote learning days on M/T/W. Wednesdays should be reserved for remote needs-based intervention/Tier III instruction, enrichment, tutoring, group/club needs, special situations, and deep cleaning.
4. Teachers will utilize Google Meet for remote face-to-face lessons, social-emotional check-ins, and relationship building with students who are unable to attend school. Google Forms can be used for social/emotional check ins and attendance on remote days. Attendance on remote learning days will follow virtual school policy and procedures. Student Failure to Communicate Logs should be kept to ensure and document student communication and participation.
5. Teachers would follow one instructional plan for both cohorts of students in each course he or she teaches.
6. In the Phase II plan, there will be no change from the Phase I plan for students who choose the fully virtual option.

Phase 3 (Remote Learning - At-Home Learning)

1. Teachers will need to collaborate with grade level and departmental teams to work out regular Google Meetings with students at least two times per week in each subject or course. Meetings should consist of social-emotional check ins, content discussions, and brief lessons about that week's learning.

Grade	Minimum	Maximum	Recommended Length to Sustain Attention
PreK	20 minutes/day	60 minutes/day	3-5 minutes
K	30 minutes/day	90 minutes/day	3-5 minutes
1-2	45 minutes/day	90 minutes/day	5-10 minutes
3-5	60 minutes/day	120 minutes/day	10-15 minutes
6-8	Class: 15 minutes/day Total: 90 minutes/day	Class: 30 minutes/day Total: 180 minutes/day	1 subject area or class
9-12	Class: 20 minutes/day Total: 120 minutes/day	Class: 45 minutes/day Total: 270 minutes/day	1 subject area or class

Illinois State Board of Education *Remote Learning Recommendations During COVID-19 Emergency FINAL DRAFT* March 27, 2020 <https://www.isbe.net/Documents/RL-Recommendations-3-27-20.pdf>

Wyoming DOE Digital Learning Guidelines
<https://1ddlxtt2jowkvs672myo6z14-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/WY-DL-Guidelines-PrintablePDF.pdf>

2. SPED teachers should be added as instructors to all applicable Google Classrooms and participate in assessing and giving feedback to students as well as providing accommodations according to students' special needs/services. SPED teachers should contact students as often as necessary.
3. Attendance will be handled according to Board policy and should be monitored through participation in meetings, assignment submissions, and digital communication platforms.
4. Student Contact Logs and Failure to Communicate Logs should be maintained and submitted to principals weekly. Principals, counselors, and instructional aides should follow up with all students not participating in class instruction and turning in assignments. The social worker and mental health therapists should continue to serve students and families on their caseloads.

Temporary changes in policies and procedures:

1. Choctaw County's current procedures for determining exam exemptions will not be in effect for the fall semester of 2020-21. Absences will not be part of the determination of exemptions. More details about temporary exam exemptions will be determined at a later date.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Important Terms:

- 1. Blended learning/instruction:** teaching and learning with a combination of face-to-face instruction and remote instruction. Teachers will post instructional content, activities, and assignments in an online learning platform and assist students with learning in face-to-face and remote environments.
- 2. Full virtual school option:** students who choose this option will not attend face to face classes. They will participate in fully online learning with their teachers. They will be required to participate in mandatory local and state assessments following the guidelines of each assessment program. They may be required to come to campus for some of these assessments.