



# INSTRUCTIONAL CONTINUITY PLAN

**2022-2023 School Year**

# Academics

## Component 1: Leadership and Planning

Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) is committed to providing continuity of instruction and services to all students in case of emergency disruptions at the classroom, school, or district level.

Staff from several district bureaus served on the planning team for the development of the Instructional Continuity Plan (ICP). Using the experiences, insight, and best practices that have resulted from our response to the disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, this cross-disciplinary team identified the following key goals that will inform the district's decision-making and the action steps that will be taken to ensure we continue providing our students and families world-class educational experiences and support services regardless of disruptions of any kind.

- Ensure instruction continues uninterrupted despite disruptions at the classroom, school, or district level.
- Ensure the safety and security of school staff, students, and their families.
- Provide school site instructional personnel with the guidance, tools, and resources they need to ensure continuity of instruction and effective remote teaching and learning.
- Remove barriers around access to devices and connectivity for remote learning.
- Ensure special population students continue to receive the support/services necessary for their academic success.
- Provide information and guidance to parents using a variety of communication channels and platforms.

The following critical success factors have been identified:

- Successful and equitable continuity of instruction, school operations, and other related services
- Effective communication at all levels and through multiple channels, including clear guidance for all stakeholders
- Strategic and effective deployment of personnel and resources
- Clear and easy-to-follow protocols for continuity of instruction, school operations, and related services
- Parent and family satisfaction with continuity of instruction and services
- Effective and timely training and professional development for key stakeholders

To effectively launch the 2022-2023 school year, M-DCPS developed a series of guidance documents, including a back-to-school checklist, immunization information, updated COVID-19 procedures, and additional parent resources. All of these documents and protocols follow the previously discussed goals and critical success factors and will be critical to our response to any future disruptions. These documents and other resources are housed at [backtoschool.dadeschools.net](https://backtoschool.dadeschools.net) for easy access by staff, parents, and community members. Communication and action plans related to the ICP will be disseminated via the district's Weekly Briefing system for employees, the district's websites, the Parent Academy informational webinars, SchoolMessenger, and social media platforms.

While the primary focus of the evaluation of the ICP will be the continuity and effectiveness of instruction during an emergency disruption at the classroom, school, or district level, data will be collected and reported regarding the magnitude of the disruption, impact on student learning, and stakeholder experiences. Metrics will be monitored to track the impact of the disruption within the school or district. The evaluation will leverage formative and summative assessments already in place to monitor student progress during any disruption, and to ascertain the impact on students' achievement. In addition, surveys will be administered to determine satisfaction with the continuity of instruction and other educational services.

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## Component 2: Curriculum Resources/Digital Content

Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) utilizes two technology platforms for remote learning, Schoology and Microsoft Teams, which are both available through the student/employee portals and provide safe and secure communication channels between teachers and students. Zoom video conferencing is also accessible through both Schoology and Microsoft Teams.

The district's learning management system (LMS), Schoology, serves as the learning/resource hub that provides a versatile platform for content delivery, submission of student work, communication, collaboration, and professional development.

Teachers can deliver instruction remotely using Schoology and Microsoft Teams and/or Zoom if the school, classroom, or individual students face emergency disruptions. To ensure continuity of learning for students, all teachers will have a Schoology course shells prepared for students to access remotely.

Should disruptions occur, every effort will be made to ensure that our students' education continues uninterrupted. Teachers can deliver content remotely to students through district-provided digital resources or teacher-identified and vetted resources aligned to the course standards/benchmarks, or a combination of both. On a limited basis, teachers may also utilize printed materials and non-internet-dependent materials with select students (i.e., students on modified curriculum) and during instances when instruction cannot be delivered through the technology platforms.

Teachers have received ongoing professional development sessions on Schoology (the LMS). The sessions include introductory training that provides teachers with the knowledge needed to get started with the learning management system by showing the steps for setting up courses, developing course materials, grading, assessing, and providing feedback. A second course, also available to teachers, focuses on student discussions, assignment rubrics, assessment creation, and accessing resources and groups within the system. Schoology's File Bold Steps course for advanced users focuses on stands-based learning, effective communication and collaboration strategies, meaningful and purposeful use of technology, and integrating textbooks, instructional applications, and digital content into Schoology courses. Teachers and administrators can access additional information on the professional development sessions at [lms.dadeschools.net](https://lms.dadeschools.net). In addition to the workshops mentioned above, the district has made available through the LMS a self-paced course and two pre-recorded webinars to introduce teachers and administrators to Schoology. As new teachers are hired, additional training opportunities will be provided through existing mechanisms such New Teacher Orientation (NTO). Ongoing support to teachers will be provided by a group of curriculum support specialists at the district that specializes in instructional technology.

Teachers have received ongoing professional development training on Microsoft Teams since the initial school closures in the spring of 2020. In addition, the district has created a series of videos and visual guides for teachers that are accessible through the teacher portal. As we transition to the LMS (Schoology), the district has maintained the use of Microsoft Teams because teachers have used it since the initial school closures, and they have developed a level of familiarity with it that will ensure it is effectively used should any disruptions occur. District support personnel has also created a series of Microsoft Teams Channels that serve as a resource/support hub for teachers. These resources will continue to be available.

Several district offices, including the Division of Academics, the Division of Innovation and School Choice, (specifically, the Office of Instructional Technology), and the Office of Professional Development and Information Technology Services currently collaborate to monitor the performance of the LMS to ensure teachers, students, and families maximize the use of the platform and fully benefit from all of its features.

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## Component 3: Professional Learning

The district uses multiple survey opportunities to determine the needs of leaders and instructional staff regarding professional learning:

- Annual Professional Needs Assessment Survey for School Improvement: Through this survey which is part of the school improvement process, the district gathers valuable input from teachers to evaluate the effectiveness of the professional learning sessions offered during the school year and to customize professional learning opportunities and support. Survey results are shared yearly with district and school teams during Synergy, the district's annual summer professional development conference, to support instructional leadership in ensuring continuous improvement. In addition, professional development that is provided at the school site is specifically tailored to the needs of the school and is tied to the school improvement efforts and the strategies that are identified as part of this process. A key component of this process involves the use of student performance data to determine the areas of focus for the site-specific professional development programs.
- The content area departments survey department chairs after each coaches' meeting or department chair meeting to customize the professional development opportunities for the department.
- The content area departments survey teachers either annually or bi-annually to identify the needs for professional development as they create their annual PD plan.

The district is very strategic in the way professional development is offered throughout the year and provides multiple opportunities and platforms for educators to access these sessions. We have also capitalized on the experiences and best practices resulting from the pandemic and have expanded the use of virtual platforms to ensure direct access to and availability of training tools that are specifically tailored for adult learners and address the needs of our instructional personnel.

- Synergy: This is a summer professional development conference provided to leadership teams (including administration and teacher leaders) in all of our schools. This conference is a key component of the school improvement process and allows schools to begin this process before the start of the school year.
- 24/7 On-Demand Professional Learning: This online digital learning tool for instructional, non-instructional, and administrative personnel is a valuable resource for school-based professional learning communities and collaborative professional development opportunities. It includes online professional learning opportunities, professional learning videos and webinars, and much more. It encompasses a variety of classroom vignettes and research-based resources on instructional practices to improve teacher effectiveness and increase student achievement.
- Face-to-face professional learning opportunities which are rigorous and embedded within the context of the curriculum area are delivered by content area departments throughout the year.
- Schoology Groups: Each curriculum department has a Schoology group where teachers have the opportunity to engage with district staff to receive customized professional development and support.

As the district expands the range of site-based, on-demand, and job-embedded professional learning opportunities available for instructional personnel, district staff play a critical role in facilitating professional learning activities for all educators. Staff will assess school and teacher needs, strategically plan professional learning programs, monitor quality and fidelity to professional learning models, oversee follow-up that facilitates the transfer of learning to classroom practice, and evaluate the effectiveness of the learning experiences.

The following are ways in which the district assesses the effectiveness of professional learning efforts to continuously improve the process and provide relevant opportunities in the future.

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- Annual and semi-annual surveys.
- Exit Tickets or evaluations after each professional learning opportunity.
- PD follow-up activities that are aimed at supporting the application of the content knowledge and pedagogical skills learned through the PD.
- Professional development surveys participants take upon completing a course so that they can get credit (Master Plan Points) that can be used towards recertification.

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## Component 4: Instructional Practices

M-DCPS has methodically and strategically planned for the paradigm shift to a hybrid teaching and learning model that is here to stay. Investments have been made in resources and instructional materials that can easily be used in both a face-to-face classroom environment and in a remote setting. Pacing guides, course shells, curriculum frameworks, and exemplar lessons have been developed to support teachers as they transition to hybrid models. Professional development, job-embedded support sessions, and on-demand webinars demonstrating best practices in hybrid or remote learning are available for teachers to easily access within the employee portal or through the learning management system.

The LMS serves as a hub for both the district's vast collection of digital resources and the delivery of instructional content. As the resource hub, the LMS will streamline content creation and distribution of resources from the district and school levels. The varied tools within the LMS will engage our students and prepare them for their academic and post-academic lives while providing a multifaceted support system for teachers and administrators for their professional growth. The use of this repository of learning objects will streamline the planning process and enable teachers to best allocate time to reflect on their practice, assessments, feedback, and differentiated instructional practices.

Annual professional development surveys, training sessions, and job-embedded support help district staff determine the digital literacy and the learning needs of our teachers. Monthly Instructional Coaching Academies in Reading and Mathematics focus on supporting educators when teaching upcoming curriculum content and standards. Technology integration, student engagement, discussing student work, and delivery of instruction are consistent components within each session. Bi-monthly content academies in other subject areas provide similar training and support for teachers. Due to the ongoing nature of these training and support sessions, staff can continuously assess the needs and development of teachers' practices and adjust accordingly.

One key element of culture in our district is our focus on data-driven instruction, which allows educators to continuously assess the effectiveness of their practices, make modifications to the instructional delivery methods if needed, and/or provide differentiated instruction based on student progress.

Since the launch of our district's Digital Convergence Initiative in 2012, with investments in technology and teacher professional development to improve the classroom experience for students and engage learners through the creation of 21st-century learning environments, the district has been identifying teachers with experience in blended learning modalities to create instructional technology cadres at every school site. The innovative teacher leaders that make up these cadres have been instrumental in providing support to their peers and accelerating the district's move towards blended learning. These teams played a pivotal role in our smooth transition to online learning during the initial school closures caused by the pandemic and will continue to be a resource for their peers as we explore multiple methods to maintain continuity of instruction through blended learning.

Information related to departments and resources to support instruction can be found on the Office of Academics and Transformation website: [oat.dadeschools.net](http://oat.dadeschools.net)

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## Component 5: Parent and Family Support

The district has an established system through which parents and families can check out a device for students to use at home. Families can request the devices through the parent portal, complete a contract and secure insurance. In the case of district-wide disruption, the district can conduct emergency technology needs surveys to determine which students and families need technology to ensure continuity of instruction. This is a practice, used during the pandemic, that informed our initial decisions regarding ways to address the technology needs of the families in our school district.

During distance learning, family engagement is pivotal for student success, regardless of what grade the student is enrolled in. To that end, the district has developed a host of training modules and e-Tips for parents designed to help families establish schedules and routines to optimize learning and create distance learning environments that foster academic achievement. These carefully vetted resources addressing distance learning and related topics are available in English, Spanish, and Haitian Creole through the district's Parent Academy's Virtual Campus. Please visit the Parent Academy website for more information at [Virtual Campus – The Parent Academy \(parentacademymiami.com\)](https://parentacademymiami.com) and e-Tips can be found at <https://www.engagemiamidade.net/e-tips-for-parents>

Also, important information for parents will be promoted and disseminated across the district's many communication channels, including voice and email messages to families, social media, news releases, radio promotion in English, Spanish, and Haitian-Creole, the district's monthly parent newsletter, as well as outreach through parent groups such as Parent Teacher Association (PTA) and the Title I Parent Advisory Committees.

The district's social workers will play a key role in conducting regular outreach and wellness checks to help support the health and safety of students and their families throughout the district. School personnel will refer students via the School Social Worker Electronic Referral system.

In addition, through the district's Comprehensive Student Health Services (CSHS) we will continue to deliver school-based health services during school hours to remove barriers to learning and ensure the health and safety of our students. CSHS will also provide health screenings which consist of hearing screenings, vision screenings, growth and development (BMI) screenings, and scoliosis screenings. CSHS also collaborates with parents/guardians, students, and school site staff to conduct child-specific training and create individualized healthcare plans for students with chronic medical conditions.

Effective two-way communication between school and home is necessary to ensure strong relationships with families and to have open and consistent communication. To that end, the district is in the process of procuring a two-way communication software that will allow teachers, administrators, and district staff to communicate with families in their home language.

The district is committed to ensuring that the appropriate education and related services are provided to students with disabilities during school closures. Tiered and layered support will be provided in accordance with each student's Individual Education Plan (IEP). Students with disabilities will have access to the curriculum through the provision of assistive technology, adaptive accommodations, and specialized curricular resources. In an effort to support families, on-demand parent webinars related to a variety of timely topics such as motivating students during distance learning and creating an environment conducive to learning will serve as an ongoing means of communication with caregivers. Additionally, meetings to develop remote learning implementation plans will be conducted virtually to ensure compliance with IEPs and 504 Plans. Technical support will be provided to schools by ESE support staff to ensure they are providing sound instructional strategies in a virtual environment.

The district will continue to ensure the needs of students are met and IEP requirements are adhered to through a systematic approach. All curriculum platforms will be available online to students and teachers as they are currently so that there will be no disruption in instruction. Curriculum support specialists will support teaching and learning via office hours, virtual classroom visits, student observations, and problem-solving dialogues to

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ensure that student needs are met in a virtual setting. To address the delivery of related services and therapies, a blended approach will be implemented. Virtual therapy will be provided in small groups or individually to the extent practical for each student's individual needs. Therapists will work with parents via phone consultations and provide video modeling, activities, and resources that could be completed with or without assistance depending on the student's age. Therapists will also share resources with the students' teachers. Ongoing support for all stakeholders will be critical during school closures.

All school administrators and ESOL Compliance Liaisons (ECLs) have digital remote access to the Ellevation ESOL compliance platform. Schools can conduct English Language Learner (ELL) State Board Rule (SBR) ELL Committee Meetings timely in a digital virtual setting. Parental participation in the decision-making process of their child's educational program, through virtual participation in the ELL Committee Meeting, is documented using E-Signature for all ELL Committee Meeting participants. Schools are required to generate and save all ESOL compliance documentation, including parent notification letters of ELL Committee Meetings, in the Ellevation platform for future access as needed. The district's services and support for all English Language Learners will continue seamlessly in the event of school closures. All curriculum platforms are made available online to students and teachers to ensure no disruption in instruction or in meeting the needs of ELLs. District staff will continue to provide support in teaching and learning through online platforms, virtual classroom visits, and virtual professional development communities. On-demand, real-time, live support will also be available for teachers daily.

In order to support the needs of students living in unstable housing situations, the District will continue working with community partners to identify temporary, safe, and stable shelter options for families or youth experiencing homelessness, to ensure access to needed supports (e.g., food, hygiene, temporary shelter, etc.). The District will also maintain regular, clear communication with homeless students, Unaccompanied Homeless Youths, parents, community service providers, shelters, and housing agencies to ensure students are connected and engaged in school. The District Homeless Liaison will review with each shelter contact the procedures for students to maintain their academic performance and continue their studies in the event of school closures. Virtual tutoring sessions will be provided if tutors cannot visit the shelter sites, due to restrictions. District UP-START Outreach Liaisons will monitor students' performance and attendance records to identify areas of need and provide case management and social work services to address academic support and ensure regular attendance and full participation in the school of students living in unstable housing situations.

## Component 6: Technology and Technical Support

Miami-Dade County Public Schools has implemented a student mobile device check-out initiative since the 2013-2014 school year. An integral component of this ongoing initiative has been a team comprised of the Chief Information Officer, the Assistant Superintendent of Innovation and Choice, the District Director for Instructional Technology and their respective staff, and designated technology hardware partners and digital content providers who all serve as the district's de facto Technology Emergency Response Team. As was done before when schools closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this team will be convened when school closure is imminent to implement the district's ICP technology support response.

At the same time that the district began its student mobile device check-out initiative, it increased its network's bandwidth and created over 45 million square feet of wireless coverage districtwide. This was done at the time to address the introduction of thousands of additional devices as well as increased digital content accessed through the network. While the district's existing network infrastructure is capable of supporting virtual instruction, it has undergone a major upgrade to further expand the bandwidth to support the anticipated increase in virtual instruction, wireless devices, and security protocols.

In the case of a disruption, the district has a process in place to conduct emergency technology needs surveys to determine which students and families need technology to continue accessing digital content and instructional activities. In the past, the district has conducted both paper and online surveys to ensure the greatest responses. Students and parents can respond to a paper survey or an online survey accessible from the district's Parent Portal. Administrators will also survey teachers to determine if any teacher needs a mobile device to work from home. Survey data (students, parents, teachers) will be analyzed and cross-referenced with mobile device inventories at schools to determine device needs at schools. A unique email address has been established, [device\\_request@dadeschools.net](mailto:device_request@dadeschools.net), for school administrators to request additional mobile devices if needed in times of district-wide school closures, and procedures are in place to request assistance from hardware technology partners (mobile devices) in redistributing mobile devices across the district to address schools with greater need.

The district has ongoing partnerships with several internet service providers and support organizations to provide students and families with internet access. The district provides several options for students and parents to gain internet access at low or no cost. The technology needs surveys conducted by the district also help identify those students/families with a need for internet access at home.

Miami-Dade County Public Schools ensures that all district-issued mobile devices are capable of accessing or connecting to required digital resources, along with online content, curriculum, and the LMS. Additionally, all devices come with modern operating systems that support FAPE by providing accessibility tools, enabling students with special needs to use the devices and avoid a disruption of educational services.

The district utilizes a web-content filtering system that blocks unsuitable materials and content. Additionally, all hotspot devices that are provided by internet service providers are equipped with a Child Internet Protection Act-compliant filter, providing a safe online experience.

The district will provide support for devices and technology in a remote learning model through various "help desk" modalities including telephone support, virtual webinars, and online FAQs. The phone hotline will provide support to parents and students in navigating distance learning, including providing homework help. The district will provide on-demand, online webinars in multiple languages available from the district's Parent Academy Virtual Campus, providing training and support for parents so that they may be better able to assist their students with technology fluency and proficiency. Additionally, up-to-date FAQs regarding instructional technology platforms/tools will be available on the district's website and linked from individual school websites. These varying means of providing support to parents, teachers, and students provide multiple points of contact for stakeholders to receive real-time support. Staff from various departments such as Instructional Technology, Information Technology Services, Innovation, School Choice, Parent Academy, and Academics are pre-

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identified to help support a technology and remote learning “help desk” in case of school closures. These staff members have expertise in various areas such as mobile device functionalities, district network issues, digital resources and content, the learning management system, and the Microsoft Teams virtual collaboration platform, which will ensure full-service help and support to students and parents.

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## Component 7: Cyber Security

M-DCPS has an ethical and legal obligation to provide a safe and secure environment for student learning; this includes an emphasis on cybersecurity and student data privacy. Current and future reliance on technology requires a strong commitment to securing and managing the district's assets and the network on which they reside.

Changes in the technology regarding instructional delivery for students comes with additional inherent security risks. Initiatives such as BYOD (Bring Your Own Device), one-to-one computing, take-home devices, and remote learning initiatives introduce challenges to managing and protecting resources.

To effectively manage and organize cybersecurity efforts, M-DCPS established a formal, written Cybersecurity Plan which was adopted in December 2020. During the drafting of the Cybersecurity Plan, M-DCPS collaborated with community partners and cybersecurity experts to identify gaps in our current security approach. Objectives within the plan are based on the National Institute of Standards in Technology (NIST) framework. The NIST has seen a slow but steady increase in the education space to assist with cybersecurity and risk mitigation planning, partially due to an increase in cyberattacks targeting the K-12 education sector.

The goal of the NIST framework was to create “a prioritized, flexible, repeatable, performance-based, and cost-effective approach, including information security measures and controls that may be voluntarily adopted by owners and operators of critical infrastructure to help them identify, assess, and manage cyber risks.” The framework is “outcome driven,” which allows organizations such as school districts to be flexible in addressing their concerns to fit within their budgetary and resource limitations.

M-DCPS engaged a third party to perform a Business Impact Analysis and used the information gathered to subsequently develop a Business Continuity Plan (BCP) to ensure the availability of systems and continuity of core business processes in the event of a disaster, incident, or system outage. Key staff from each district bureau were engaged throughout the process of drafting the BCP to assist with identifying key systems, controls, and/or processes, with the end goal of ensuring continuity and accessibility. The objective of the BCP was to determine what systems need to be restored after a disaster, incident, or system outage, how long the district could function without these systems, and what alternatives might be available in the event of any interruption of service.

M-DCPS also established an Incident Response Plan (IRP) designed to address specific concerns related to District operations and functionality. The IRP provides the appropriate steps to be taken and documented in the event of an Information Security Incident (i.e., cybersecurity incident, data breach, etc.) to help ensure that all incidents are handled in a prompt and consistent manner. This helps not only ensure a thorough, efficient approach to resolving incidents but also addresses applicable legal requirements to limit the risk arising from an Information Security Incident. The information collected and documentation produced by the execution of this IRP is also intended to assist M-DCPS in making appropriate changes to improve security measures or validate the current approach related to in-person as well as remote students and staff.

Additionally, understanding the increased reliance on technology and the evolving threat landscape, the Miami-Dade School Board proffered and subsequently approved an item initiating the creation of a Technology Advisory Committee (TAC) to facilitate collaboration with experienced community partners and technology/cybersecurity experts. The focus of the TAC will be to ensure that the proposed strategies and technology roadmap follow industry best practices and provide a logical, sustainable approach. The TAC will meet quarterly (or more frequently as necessary) and act in an advisory capacity to provide strategic input and guidance regarding technology implementations and cybersecurity strategies. The long-term success of technology-based initiatives will require a strong commitment to the proper implementation and management of the requisite infrastructure and technology solutions. Some information discussed in TAC meetings is subject to non-disclosure pursuant to the Florida Sunshine Law and Florida Public Records Act.

The district will continue to evaluate and implement necessary measures in order to protect sensitive resources and evolve with persistent threats. Annual penetration testing along with periodic gap analysis testing will help

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gauge the efficacy of current and proposed cybersecurity solutions to help ensure the integrity and availability of district network resources along with guiding cybersecurity efforts. M-DCPS is committed to continuing the education and improving the awareness of our user base as a function of maintaining a successful security approach.

The Cybersecurity Plan will be revised annually or more frequently as required, along with the BCP and IRP. Applicable policies and standards governing IT infrastructure and related topics (Network Security Standards, Staff/Student Responsible Use Policies, etc.) will be reviewed regularly for accuracy and relevance, with revisions occurring as necessary. Proper governance and enforcement ensure that the legal and ethical obligations of the district are met, and that business functions can be standardized and streamlined to ensure efficiency and availability.

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The central point of communication for parents and families in our district will be the school sites. In addition, the different district offices that support the programs for special student populations will also play an important role in communicating with families and providing important information regarding the continuation of services. These offices will use existing communication channels to keep both schools and families informed to ensure continuity of instruction and services.

The district's Parent Academy will also play a pivotal role in providing valuable information to parents. This parent engagement initiative helps parents become full partners in their children's education, informing parents about the importance of their roles, uniting families and schools, and giving parents a fuller sense of their rights, responsibilities, and the educational opportunities available. Free workshops and classes are offered monthly throughout Miami-Dade County for both parents and children. In addition, parents will have the opportunity to participate in workshops that are aligned with their needs and are conveniently located near their homes and workplace. Workshops will also be provided virtually.

Further, the district's Office of Communications will provide information to parents across the district's many communication channels, including voice and email messages to families, social media, news releases, radio promotion in English, Spanish, and Haitian-Creole, the district's monthly parent newsletter, as well as outreach through the Parent Teacher Student Association.

The district has ongoing partnerships with several internet service providers and organizations to provide students and families with internet access. The district provides several options for students and parents to gain internet access at low or no cost. The technology needs surveys conducted by the district also help identify those students/families with a need for internet access at home.

Throughout the pandemic, the district has made a concerted effort to ensure that the needs of students with Individual Education Plans (IEP) were met. One successful practice was the implementation of Remote Learning Implementation Plans (RLIP). RLIPs must be developed annually for every student with an IEP/504 Plan. The RLIP ensures continuity of instruction and accommodations in a remote setting if in-person learning is not possible. In addition, while academic supports were established, a mechanism to ensure related services for ESE students also continued in a modified manner while still adhering to each student's IEPs. This and other best practices will play a pivotal role in maintaining the continuity of services should disruptions occur. The district will continue to research best practices in remote learning by identifying high-yield strategies from other very large school districts.

In the event of community-wide power outages or any other disruption that prevents students and teachers from accessing the internet, schools will be asked to organize distributions of instructional materials, lesson packets, and/or textbooks for family pick-up. The district's Office of Exceptional Student Education will provide access to instructional learning resources with lesson plans for modified curriculum students as well as home learning strategies for all ESE students. Whenever possible, learning packet distribution will be tied to food distribution sites as a means of providing continuous educational opportunities.

# Operations

## Component 9: Continuation of School Operations

In the event of emergency school closures, the safety and security of students and staff are at the forefront of decision-making in Miami-Dade County Public Schools. Ensuring instructional and operational continuity involves the coordination of services in a variety of ways to guarantee that students receive uninterrupted access to required services, including mental health services and meals provided by the Department of Food and Nutrition. The District will ensure that all procedures are aligned with updated Centers for Disease and Prevention guidelines, if applicable.

During an emergency school closure, emergency hotlines are activated, and phone numbers are publicized. These become a critical conduit for information to schools and the broader community. The hotlines are operated through an Emergency Command Center staffed by representatives from all district departments, which facilitates immediate response to questions or concerns that may arise.

As the leaders of their school sites, principals will coordinate all facets of the school closure and will work with teachers and other school staff to ensure they have the equipment and support necessary to teach the students in a remote environment. Non-instructional and other support staff may be reassigned from their regular duties to assist in these efforts, as well as support communication efforts with the school community. In the past, central office administrative staff, transportation employees, and other available personnel were deployed to school sites during closures to assist in carrying out the day-to-day operations at the schools. This practice will be maintained should any disruptions or emergency closures occur in the future.

In the event of a school closure, mental health coordinators will continue to provide services to students and families. Regardless of the instructional delivery model, a full continuum of mental health support for students and their families will continue to be provided virtually or telephonically. The district will maintain a mental health hotline to support its students and families and provide ongoing services. Parents and students will be encouraged to contact the Mental Health Assistance Line for immediate support, Monday through Friday, from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Parents will also be encouraged to access the Department of Mental Health Services website ([mentalhealthservices.dadeschools.net](http://mentalhealthservices.dadeschools.net)) for additional resources.

The district's licensed/certified mental health coordinators will continue to support students and families throughout an emergency school closure by linking them to resources, providing individual and family counseling services, and referring them to community and contracted agencies to ensure they receive the immediate support needed.

In the event of school closures, student meals will be made available for parent pick-up. If an individual school site is temporarily closed, meals for students enrolled in that location will be provided for parent pick-up at a scheduled time from an open school food service program. If the emergency closure impacts the entire district, the district will deploy the emergency school meal distribution model implemented in March 2020 where multiple geographically dispersed school locations across the county were opened to distribute meals for students. Parents and families will be informed of the school meal distribution plan, locations, and schedule through school messaging systems, local media, and community-based organizations. Additionally, personnel from other district departments will be deployed as needed to assist with the preparation, packaging, and distribution of food.

Recognizing that community-based organizations have resources and networks that benefit schools, students, and families, M-DCPS will augment its efforts to support students and families during periods of school closure by leveraging community- and faith-based organizations as well as local agencies such as law enforcement, municipalities, the State Attorney's Office, the Department of Children and Families, the Department of Juvenile Justice, and the Miami-Dade County Public Housing Division. These entities will assist the district by enhancing outreach and communication with families, supporting efforts to locate students who are disengaged or unaccounted for, and providing wraparound services.

Appropriate education and related services will continue to be provided to students with disabilities during disruptions. All curriculum platforms will be available online to students and teachers as they are currently so

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that there will be no disruption in instruction. Following each student's Individual Education Plan (IEP), tiered and layered support will be provided. Through assistive technology, adaptive accommodations, and specialized curricular resources, students with disabilities will be able to access the curriculum. Families will be trained on an ongoing basis through on-demand webinars on timely and relevant topics including student motivation and engagement during distance learning and effective learning environments. To ensure compliance with IEPs and 504 Plans, meetings to develop remote learning implementation plans will be conducted virtually, if necessary. District staff will provide technical support to schools to ensure they are providing sound instructional strategies in a virtual environment. To deliver related services and therapies, a blended approach will be implemented. Virtual therapy will be provided in small groups or individually to the extent practical for each student's individual needs. Therapists will work with parents via phone consultations and provide video modeling, activities, and resources that could be completed with or without assistance depending on the student's age. Therapists will also share resources with the students' teachers. Ongoing support for all stakeholders will be critical during school closure closures.

# Communications

## Component 10: Emergency and Ongoing Communications

Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) began using SchoolMessenger as its official automated message platform in August 2019. SchoolMessenger is a communications system that allows schools and the school district to send important messages to parents and staff quickly and efficiently. The system is utilized to complement existing messaging. Each school principal is provided a SchoolMessenger account that contains its parents and employees with up to three users at each school site. Messages may be delivered in English, Spanish, and Haitian Creole. SchoolMessenger has three modes of delivery, including voice, email, and text messages, and has four categories - general, emergency, attendance, and survey. Messages may also be delivered through the SchoolMessenger Mobile App allowing users flexibility when sending a message.

An important component of communications is emergency/crisis operations and management with immediate, appropriate, and accurate messaging to specific stakeholders. When an emergency occurs, the need to deliver key messages to stakeholders, specifically parents, students, and employees, is critical to a smooth and seamless process. Communication should be proactive, responsive, and action-oriented. Miami-Dade County Public Schools' (M-DCPS) Office of Communications (OOC) manages the district's automated communications messaging system (SchoolMessenger), social media messaging, and media outreach/messaging – all methods the district uses to provide important information to parents, students, employees and our community of stakeholders.

M-DCPS has a comprehensive crisis communications protocol, which is as follows:

District and school personnel will follow existing district procedures related to the reporting of emergencies as outlined in the M-DCPS Emergency Operations Plan. During a crisis/emergency, only the Superintendent or designee, the Chief Communications Officer, and Schools Police Chief are authorized to release information to the media and the general public regarding the incident.

The Chief Communications Officer (designee) will approve automated messages and text messages for distribution to parents and employees as needed. The Chief Communications Officer will also approve messaging for distribution to the media and social media platforms.

Crisis automated messaging at the school level must be made after consultation with School Operations/Region Offices. Schools are provided the Crisis Messaging for Parents, Students, and Stakeholders Guide as a standardized system to effectively manage messaging to ensure that students, parents, employees, and other school and District stakeholders are kept informed during an emergency.

This guide supports the District's Emergency Operations Plan and Emergency Communications Plan to provide timely and accurate information in an emergency or crisis. The M-DCPS Crisis Messaging for Parents, Students, and Stakeholders Guide aims to meet the following objectives:

- Provide a guide with clearly defined action steps for OOC staff to manage messaging during an emergency/crisis event effectively.
- Ensure that crisis messaging is accurate, and unified, and reinforces the district's commitment to student and employee safety.
- Support existing emergency procedures to ensure the timely dissemination of information to parents and students, and when necessary, to employees, media, and other community stakeholders.

The guide includes template messages in English, Spanish, and Haitian Creole to address various emergency scenarios. They allow schools to customize a message for their incident.

During a crisis, M-DCPS follows the below actions steps, when necessary:

- 1) Text Message using appropriate message script (District/Region) (The text message feature may be used for priority crisis messaging. Principals/Schools may disseminate text messages after consultation

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with School Operations/Region Offices.)

- 2) Social Media – Coordinate with the appropriate Region Office (District/Schools)
- 3) Follow-up SchoolMessenger Text Message (Region Office, if needed, i.e., controlled dismissal)
- 4) Follow-up School Social Media – Coordinate with Region Office (District/Schools)
- 5) End-of Day-Recap: SchoolMessenger Voice Message using appropriate message script and/or email
- 6) Distribution of News Release/Fact Sheet/Position Statement (District will prepare and share with schools if needed)

If needed, at the appropriate time, the school administration will make a school-wide announcement about the situation/incident and encourage students to use social media responsibly.