



BUFFALO PUBLIC SCHOOLS

2020-2021

Reopening Plan

100% Remote Learning Plan

Following Period of Extended Closure

801 City Hall
65 Niagara Square
Buffalo, NY 14202
(716) 816-3500

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CONTINUITY OF LEARNING

The Buffalo Public Schools continuity of learning plan for the 2020-21 school year includes in-person, remote, and hybrid models of instruction. Instructional guidance will be provided to schools to support teaching and learning in any environment. The instructional program includes regular, substantive interaction between teachers and students whether delivered in-person, remotely or through a hybrid model of instruction.

SCHOOL REOPENING MODELS

OVERVIEW OF 100% REMOTE LEARNING MODEL

The New York State Education Department (NYSED), along with the Governor's office, encouraged every District to develop three (3) plans. One such plan is the remote learning model, described below.

100% Remote Learning Model (entire District is remote) *:

- Students will remain at home, and teachers will provide remote instruction.
- Instruction will be delivered remotely by teachers in both synchronous and asynchronous formats.
- Teachers will continue to provide whole group and small group instruction as appropriate, as well as provide appropriate differentiation and intervention.
- Course assignments, links, videos, lessons, and documents will be hosted through the District's learning management system, Schoology, which also allows messaging. Teachers will provide virtual instruction and host virtual office hours using Microsoft Teams conferencing.
- The District will seek to maximize online credit accrual and recovery opportunities.
- If students in grades PK-1 are not able to access the remote instruction provided by their teachers, hard copy learning packets will be made available.
- If allowed by SED/DOH, and as practicable, special consideration will be given to students with disabilities currently identified for services in special class. Priority for in-person instruction will be given to students in 6:1:1 and 8:1:1 settings.

***This plan explains the 100% remote instructional model. The District is working with stakeholders to determine how best to address scheduling and other questions for families who choose the Remote Option as part of the Hybrid Model. As this hybrid option plan evolves, it will be linked here. Students who select the entirely remote instructional model will still retain a seat at their current school. In August, families will be asked to express their preference for the hybrid or remote learning model.**

SYNCHRONOUS AND ASYNCHRONOUS LEARNING

Remote learning models require teachers to deliver synchronous and asynchronous instruction. Synchronous learning means that teachers deliver instruction in real time, whether in-person or in a virtual environment. Asynchronous learning refers to students' ability to access information, demonstrate what they have learned, and communicate with classmates and instructors at different times and at their own pace.

Examples of Synchronous Instruction with Substantive Interaction

- Live, in-person instruction
- Live, virtual (remote) instruction
- Virtual office hours

Examples of Asynchronous Instruction with Substantive Interaction

(Asynchronous instruction will be supported by consultation and communication via email/phone/virtual platform/other technology)

- Writing or other assignments posted in Schoology
- Group, partner, or individual work in Office 365 or other platform
- Self-paced Nearpod or Grad Point lessons
- Readings, videos, video-taped lessons accompanied by a means to verify participation, including responding to questions, completing assignments or exit tickets, or student participation in online discussion boards
- Completion of activities to complement core instruction using District-approved online programs including but not limited to Zearn, Moby Max, Lexia Core5 or PowerUp, myON, Think Central, Pearson Realize, NextLesson, and Quill
- Hard copy learning packets aligned to grade level state standards

Building administrators will work with teachers to develop a calendar or schedule to manage expectations for asynchronous work, taking into consideration barriers to student access and gradually building student stamina for independent study. Schools will communicate the calendar or schedule to families at the beginning of the school year.

SCHEDULING EXPECTATIONS FOR REMOTE LEARNING

DAILY SCHEDULES

Student schedules for remote learning will be reflective of a full day of instruction that includes both synchronous and asynchronous learning opportunities. Schedules will also be specific to grade bands and subjects. Student specific schedules will be made available to the school community prior to the start of the school year. In the event that a change has to be made to a school schedule, or that the overall model of instruction changes, schools will share this information with students, families, and staff as soon as possible in order to allow families to plan childcare and work arrangements.

Teachers in grades 7-12 will continue to provide five periods of instruction daily (e.g., live, virtual instruction, office hours), receive time for lunch and a preparation period, and perform non-teaching duties. Elementary teachers will continue to instruct throughout the day (e.g., live, virtual instruction, office hours) excluding their preparation period, lunch, and any scheduled grade level meeting times or non-teaching duties.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF TEACHER AIDES AND ASSISTANTS

In a remote environment, teacher aides and teacher assistants may continue to provide important supports to schools and families. For instance, teacher aides and assistants may conduct wellness calls to support families. They may model and help students understand necessary hygiene and safety protocols. They may continue to help schools bridge the home to school connection by serving as liaisons, delivering food to homes, assisting with technology concerns. Teacher assistants may also help to implement remote lessons.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

FIRST WEEKS OF SCHOOL: REMOTE LEARNING MODEL

The impact of the pandemic is far-reaching; it affects students' readiness to engage with instruction and families' ability to support learning. It is imperative that we infuse social emotional learning and supports as essential and integral elements into our planning for the new year. Consequently, the first two weeks of school will include a daily focus on safety, wellness, wellbeing, and social-emotional learning utilizing a culturally and linguistically responsive lens. Additionally, culturally responsive instructional lessons will prioritize anti-racist and anti-bias learning opportunities for students and teachers and provide spaces to center joy and empathy in the lives of our students. These lessons are designed to allow for community healing and supportive relationships as students process their emotions and build confidence for success in the instructional year ahead.

Teachers will also use the first two weeks to administer diagnostic-type measures to determine individual student needs and target extra help to ensure both academic and social-emotional needs are addressed.

Furthermore, BPS will focus on training students on best practices in remote learning, digital fluency and citizenship, and the use of the tools the District has endorsed to support remote learning. This training will include:

- Basic computer use
- Remote learning using Schoology
- Engagement and participation with teachers using Microsoft Teams
- Online safety and digital citizenship using Nearpod

CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT: REMOTE LEARNING MODEL

Equity is at the heart of all school instructional decisions in the BPS. Whether delivered in-person, remotely, or through a hybrid, there are clear opportunities for instruction that are rigorous, accessible to all students, and aligned with State learning standards. We recognize that many students experienced unfinished learning due to their experiences during the spring's extended closure. As appropriate, curriculum committees are in the process of identifying relevant standards or skills from the previous spring to be integrated into the current year's instruction through curriculum spiraling and RTI/AIS opportunities. Meanwhile, the current year's standards/skills are being prioritized and addressed with appropriate adjustments to pacing. In alignment with best practice, the BPS continues to emphasize instructional rigor and focus on the Instructional Priorities for Literacy and Mathematics as part of daily instruction.

Diagnostic-type assessments administered in the beginning of the 2020-21 school year (mathematics grades 1-Algebra/reading K-5) will help teachers to determine what additional supports are needed for each student. Additional measures, including Lexile assessments, will be incorporated as appropriate. Training and support for administration and use will be provided to teachers during the Superintendent Conference Days in September. Additional guidance for teachers and administrators will be shared through the District's Instructional and Student Support Re-Opening Plan 2020-21.

District-specific assessments that can be administered online will continue to be administered; this includes District screening measures DIBELS* (K-5) and Star Math (K-8). Online District Benchmark Assessments (DBAs)

will be optional. Other District-specific assessments that cannot be administered in an online platform will not be administered in a remote learning environment.

*Literacy coaches and SRTs will receive training this August to administer the updated version of DIBELS online, which has been abbreviated. It is recommended that literacy coaches and SRTs conduct the online beginning of year (BOY) benchmark testing this fall.

ADVANCED PLACEMENT (AP) AND ACCELERATED COURSES

BPS will offer AP and dual enrollment college courses as part of the 100% remote learning model. The District has invested a great deal of time and resources in training AP teachers and increasing the number of courses offered in schools to improve access. In addition, the District currently partners with Equal Opportunity Schools (EOS) at multiple sites with the goal of increasing access and opportunity for low income students and students of color. Since 2018, student enrollment has risen over 61%, and African American and Hispanic/Latinx students have experienced significant increases in AP course enrollment.

Under a 100% remote learning model, schools will continue to offer established grade 8 accelerated course offerings and will add world language offerings for high school credit.

CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION: REMOTE LEARNING MODEL

In a completely online learning environment, CTE teachers will be trained to effectively use the Schoology platform to connect with students, post assignments, and administer assessments. Microsoft Teams will be used to deliver synchronous lessons during the school week while building relationships with students and checking on their social-emotional status. Plans are underway to post recorded lessons and use instructional videos in Schoology for students to review, if needed (missed the lesson or need further reinforcement). Teachers will be available during office hours to work individually with students. Work-based learning is now approved to be virtual, per new guidance from NYSED, along with other flexibilities concerning Career Development and Occupational Studies (CDOS) pathways. Attendance will be reviewed on an individual basis in alignment with District policy. Collaborate with the Division of Multilingual for translation of materials when needed. Advisory partnerships will continue planning and collaborating remotely.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION: REMOTE LEARNING MODEL

The BPS Spring 2020 Instructional Guidance During Period of Extended Closure document incorporates District health and/or PE learning packets aligned to standards. Teachers will use Schoology, Microsoft Teams, Nearpod and other learning platforms. Teachers will include virtual office hours to connect with students in small group, on-on-one, and to answer questions and provide supports. Teachers will, likewise, consider special events and activities that can be done remotely (i.e., At-Home Family Field Day, Virtual Gymnasiums).

Teachers will access a variety of quality resources to deliver the program. Some examples are:

- SHAPE America Health Moves Minds
- OPEN PE curriculum
- SEL Curriculum: Jessie Lewis Choose Love (K -12)
- NYS AAHPERD
- CATCH PK-8 online curriculum & CATCH classroom instruction boxes
- SPARK online PE curriculum and other research written by John Ratey
- Project ACES Videos

- Pure Edge SEL/Yoga
- Yoga for Classrooms

SPECIAL EDUCATION: REMOTE LEARNING MODEL

Special Education teachers will follow the District's daily instructional schedule. Special education teachers will create Distance Learning Plans for each student with a disability that would encompass specially designed instruction (SDI) and other supports (accommodations/ modifications/assistive technology) and services (speech, occupational therapy, physical therapy, vision, hearing, counseling). Individual learning plans will include a contact log that documents student name, the amount of instruction provided, when the instruction was provided, amount of time provided, as well as all other contacts with parents/guardians, etc. The Division of Special Education will continue to offer related service via teletherapy. Training will be offered to all service providers on the implementation of teletherapy. All CSE meetings including annual review, re-evaluation, initial meetings and amendments will be held remotely. Evaluations will be completed remotely if the assessment permits remote administration. When appropriate, a consult model may also be utilized. If none of these methods are feasible, the District will seek an agreement with the parent to extend the timeline for evaluation.

MULTILINGUAL EDUCATION: REMOTE LEARNING MODEL

Multilingual Student Placement:

The District will continue to follow the NYSED guidance on provisional identification and use the BPS process that was created for LAC. Formal screening for any student who has been given a provisional status will take place once school resumes normal operations.

Stand-Alone:

Teachers will provide stand-alone instruction through the District's online platforms. The ENL teacher will work with students from different classrooms who need the same instructional supports.

Integrated English as a New Language (ENL):

Teachers will provide integrated instruction through the District's online platform. ENL teachers and content area teachers will collaborate to plan, prepare and deliver lessons that include scaffolding and provide multiple opportunities for language development during content area instruction.

Additional ENL Considerations: Multilingual learners will receive independent skill-building exercises daily as assigned to address the four modalities. Parents will receive virtual training on the District's learning management system (LMS), Schoology, in order to provide families opportunities to support and monitor their child's learning. The trainings will be offered in the District's top seven languages. Moreover, the District will facilitate virtual workshops and host office hours to support families of students in English as a new language programs.

Bilingual Education:

Bilingual education teachers will follow the expectations outlined by the District for each grade-level. A guidance document will be provided in order to support teachers to implement a sound language allocation policy.

The District will facilitate virtual workshops and host office hours to support families of students in bilingual education programs. Instructional resources for bilingual students will be provided in both English and Spanish (printed/online).

TECHNOLOGY

ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY (AUP)

Increased access to technology has numerous benefits, but it also has the potential for abuse. For this reason, the BPS has specific agreement guidelines that address appropriate use of technology and electronic resources. These guidelines regarding technology and electronic resources apply to computer use at school; they also apply to home use of the BPS issued computer and/or hotspot. The District's acceptable use policy for both staff and students can be found at <https://www.buffaloschools.org/page/2176> .

LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Feedback from parents during the earlier closure this spring indicated that the District should seek to reduce the number of systems and logins that students/families needed to use. Therefore, in 2019-20, all teachers PK-12 will use the learning management system, Schoology, to facilitate the delivery, participation, and engagement of educational courses and instruction. Teachers will create courses and post course content in Schoology, including video and website links, virtual conferencing links, documents, PowerPoints, and Nearpod lessons. Students are also able to message their teachers through Schoology.

Wherever possible, the District intends to leverage online resources such as digital copies of textbooks, supplemental programs like Zearn (for K-6 math), online platforms and applications like Lexia Core5 and PowerUp, myON, Moby Max Math/Science, Think Central, Nearpod, Pearson Realize, and Castle Learning. These resources can be accessed through our single sign-on portal Clever. Links to Clever can also be hosted in Schoology. Younger students can also use badges to login to Schoology.

Please note, the District is working to procure devices for all grade levels that do not currently have 1:1 allocations. However, until PK-1 students have sufficient access to a device and/or connectivity, they will receive hard copy learning materials.

During the first weeks of school, the District will orient students on the use of the technology and the instructional applications being used for learning. Parent orientations will take place in August and throughout September.

PLATFORM FOR SYNCHRONOUS INSTRUCTION, CONFERENCING

Microsoft Teams is the District's conferencing platform for use with students. Teams allows teachers to provide synchronous instruction and to host virtual office hours. Teachers will also schedule virtual conferences through Teams to support students individually and/or small in groups. Links will be hosted in Schoology.

ASSESSING TECHNOLOGY NEEDS

BPS is taking a two-fold approach to determining the level of residential access to devices and high-speed internet for students and teachers. The BPS is in partnership with Charter-Spectrum and has provided address information for teachers and students. Charter-Spectrum has taken the address information and cross-checked it with their internal records to identify addresses for which internet service is provided. Based on the scope of their service area, the preliminary analysis has yielded the following results.

- 21,851 total locations submitted to Spectrum for analysis
- 322 duplicate addresses were found
- 16,346 addresses are already Internet customers, Free Broadband, Spectrum Internet Assist or paying customers - this will be monitored weekly
- 975 do not qualify for the Spectrum Stay Connected Program due to the requirement of some type of construction
- 4,208 are ready to be serviced as there is no internet and they are eligible for this program

In addition to the aforementioned assessment, teacher and student households will be surveyed by the BPS to obtain data concerning the availability, stability, and reliability of internet access, the availability and extent of use and/or sharing of a home computer, and the need for a hotspot, and/or computer.

PROVISION OF COMPUTERS

As part of the 2017 Classroom Technology Initiative, the BPS assigned 23,000 devices to students in grades 3-12. At the onset of the pandemic and school closures, beginning March 17, 2020, the District has been continually working to provide computers to students for remote learning. To date, over 20,000 devices have been distributed to students in grades 3-12 and will continue to be taken home with students. Along with contacting the school, parents can also call the District helpline if a device is still needed, and the device assigned to that student will be reserved for pick up. Reminders are also sent to families if the device is not picked up and, in some cases, home deliveries are made. The District continues to deploy laptops to any remaining students who have not collected their assigned devices and will provide devices to newly enrolled students in grades 3-12 prior to the opening of school, beginning August 12, 2020. IT will collaborate closely with school administrators to make certain every student is provided with a computer at the start of school.

PK-2 students enrolled in summer school were invited to receive an iPad for summer remote learning. The District currently does not have ample iPads to support a full 1:1 deployment in grades PK-2; however, Smart Schools Emergency Funding was **requested and approved** so the District can procure the additional devices needed for all PK-2 students. The BPS is in the process of actively purchasing additional iPads for these students. In the interim, we will prioritize devices to PK-2 students who are in a home without a sibling using a BPS issued device. To support consistency of instruction, we will focus on initially outfitting as many full grade levels as possible, starting with grade 2. Remaining grade levels will be supported with paper learning packets until such time the District is able to provide an iPad for each student in grades PK-1.

The BPS Technology Action Committee has worked together to refine and streamline the device distribution process for our families. The District will be taking a “household” approach to distribution, allowing us to address families’ needs for hot spots when they come for devices, while eliminating any need for parents to come on multiple days/times. **Each household has been assigned a specific date**, which is included in the customized letter being sent home. School Messenger will also be used to send targeted messages to individual families. The Information Technology Department will be collaborating with the **Division of Multilingual to offer**

days specifically targeted to our multilingual families, August 17th – 19th. Translators and cultural resource specialists will be available to assist families with any questions they may have.

		August 12 th	August 13 th	August 14 th
		Households with a student in a high school in need of a device or needing to exchange a device (iPad for laptop) primarily English speaking (9:00 AM – 3:00 PM)		
August 17 th	August 18 th	August 19 th	August 20 th	August 21 st
Multilingual households with a student in a high school in need of a device or needing to exchange a device (iPad for laptop or vice versa) (9:00 AM – 3:00 PM)	Multilingual households with oldest child in grades 2-8 in need of a device or needing to exchange a device (iPad for laptop) (9:00 AM – 3:00 PM)		Summer School Graduation/ Device Collection (10:00 AM – 2:00 PM)	Households with oldest child in grades 2-8 in need of a device or needing to exchange a device (iPad for laptop) primarily English speaking (9:00 AM – 3:00 PM)
August 24 th	August 24 th	August 25 th	August 26 th	August 27 th
Households with oldest child in grades 2-8 in need of a device or needing to exchange a device (iPad for laptop) primarily English speaking (9:00 AM – 3:00 PM)				
August 31 st	September 1 st	September 2 nd	September 3 rd	September 4 th
ECC Households with oldest child in grades 2-4 in need of a device (9:00 AM – 3:00 PM)				
These days will also be used to address any newly enrolled students or individual requests for families with transportation issues. Open distribution hours for all families (9:00 AM – 3:00 PM)				

All teachers in the BPS presently have mobile computer devices for providing instruction to students. To ensure both teachers and teacher aides/assistants have optimally performing devices, the District is working to upgrade the oldest teacher devices and provide external cameras to teachers who may be using laptops without a camera. The BPS will also make every effort to provide teacher aides/assistants devices to the extent practicable. Additionally, as part of the Smart Schools Emergency Funding, **approval was granted** for additional staff computers needed for replacements if/when necessary. The District will be working to procure those additional devices as well.

INTERNET ACCESS

BPS will continue exploring multiple solutions to provide the most efficient, effective, and cost sensitive solution to provide internet access to all students and teachers. Options being considered include procuring additional hotspots and/or partnering with the local cable provider to provide internet access at a discounted price to all student households presently without it. Approved Smart Schools Emergency Funding will help to cover the procurement of additional hotspots. The District intends to maximize the use of those funds to provide internet access to all households that currently do not have it.

At the onset of the pandemic, the District secured over 2,000 hotspots and extended invitations for students to make a request to obtain one. The BPS is still working to secure additional hotspots through service providers, grants, and partnerships with local companies and agencies. The District has also collaborated with Charter-

Spectrum to develop an enterprise program for internet access. Based on funding available, the BPS will pursue an option or hybrid of hotspots and broadband to ensure, to the extent practicable, that all students, teachers, and teacher aides/assistants have reliable internet access for learning and instruction.

TECHNOLOGY SUPPORT AND SERVICE FOR FAMILIES

Technical information for students and families is located on the “Learning from Home” BPS web page: <https://www.buffaloschools.org/domain/9532>. Supporting documentation on this web page will help parents and students learn how to connect to their student’s learning resources.

Students who forget their username or password can use the BPS Help Line (816-7100) to retrieve their correct username and password.

In the event that a device is damaged or broken, students/parents can call the BPS Help Line to report the issue. Should it be determined that a device need to be repaired, the parent/ student will be asked to bring the device to the new Center for Innovation, Technology and Training (PS 28) so that BPS support technicians can manage the repair or replace the device. The consolidation of IT field support in one building creates an improved opportunity to facilitate safer device distribution and repair/replacements, and serve as an epicenter for future innovative activities, events, training, and support.

As a further effort to provide ways for parents and students to connect with the BPS for support, the District will be implementing a communication connection form that will send emails to various departments with parent/student inquiries or requests for assistance.

The BPS also intends to leverage its Student Technology Leadership Program participants to expand available capacity to support parents and students on basic computer use, Schoology, Infinite Campus – Parent Portal, Microsoft Teams, and Digital Citizenship. Some of the strategies include: web sessions and virtual workshops via live video conferencing to provide support through the end of summer; continued support via web sessions, virtual workshops and/or real time interaction during the school year during after school hours and if possible; during school hours based on the cadence of the student’s school day; and a Saturday workshop series.

PARENT ORIENTATION TO TECHNOLOGY

In response to stakeholder feedback, this summer and fall the BPS will conduct training for families on our learning management system and virtual conferencing platform. This training will be available in video form and translated into our top languages. The videos will be hosted on our website, widely publicized, and archived for future use. We will also host a Facebook Live session through our Parent Centers and run numerous virtual training sessions for parents to acclimate them to these resources.

In addition, the BPS will encourage parents to create parent accounts for Infinite Campus Parent Portal and Schoology, our learning management system. The parent accounts allow families to see their students’ grades (Parent Portal) and assignments (Schoology), receive District information (Schoology and Parent Portal), and communicate with teachers (Schoology).

SCHOOL OUTREACH

To provide additional and consistent outreach, schools will identify an adult at the building level to contact each family. This staff member will serve as the main liaison for the family throughout the course of the year. During

the month of September, the staff member will contact the family to determine any technology/connectivity needs or other necessary supports. The District will generate a list of questions for the staff member to ask families in order to facilitate contact, including technology needs and registration for Parent Portal and parent Schoology accounts. Contact will be tracked through the Infinite Campus (IC) parent engagement tab, allowing principals to run ad hoc reports. Before contacting the family, the staff member will check the IC Summary sheet to determine whether the family prefers to be contacted in a language other than English. If this is the case, the staff member will use Talking Points or Language Line to contact the family. Training for both services will be offered during the Superintendent Conference Days in September. In the event that a family cannot be reached after repeated attempts, attendance teachers, social workers, Parent Engagement Liaisons (PELs), and District partners and parent volunteers will go pay home visits to determine how we can better help families connect with the school District.

TECHNOLOGY SUPPORT AND SERVICE FOR STAFF

Staff with technology concerns will contact the BPS Help Desk to describe the problem and should enter a Team Dynamix help desk ticket. After triaging the issue, a device swap may be initiated if determined that the device needs to be replaced.

STUDENT DATA PRIVACY AND SECURITY

Pursuant to Education Law section 2-d, the BPS has published on the Parents' Bill of Rights for Student Data Privacy and Security. Access to the Parents Bill of Rights for Student Data Privacy and Security can be found on the Office of Shared Accountability section of the Buffalo Public Schools website at the following address: <https://www.buffaloschools.org/Page/294>. For purposes of further ensuring confidentiality and security of student data, the BPS Parents' Bill of Rights requires that each contract an educational agency enters into with a third-party contractor shall include the following supplemental information:

- The exclusive purposes for which the student, teacher, or principal data will be used;
- How the third-party contractor will ensure that the subcontractors, persons or entities that the third-party contractor will share the student, teacher or principal data with, if any, will abide by data protection and security requirements;
- When the agreement with the third-party contractor expires and what happens to the student data or teacher or principal data upon expiration of the agreement;
- If and how a parent, student, eligible student, teacher or principal may challenge the accuracy of the student, teacher or principal data that is collected; and
- Where the student data or teacher or principal data will be stored (described in such a manner as to protect data security), and the security protections taken to ensure such data will be protected, including whether such data will be encrypted.

The District is reviewing all existing third-party contracts to ensure they are compliant with student data privacy and security.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT FOR REMOTE LEARNING

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT NEEDS

The BPS recognizes that professional development, coaching, and follow up must be consistent and ongoing to ensure that professional learning has been successfully integrated into practice. Teachers will need ongoing professional development and coaching regarding ways to increase student engagement and effectively adapt instruction during remote learning sessions. In addition, timely and effective support for staff, family and students is necessary to engage with the required technology.

Identification of content addresses the need to complete ongoing cycles of professional development (e.g., Restorative Practices), the need to support teachers implementing new programs (e.g., Zearn), student data and data from the PLT survey administered in the spring of 2020, and the need to address social and emotional learning, trauma-informed care, and restorative and culturally responsive practices.

PROFESSIONAL GROWTH SYSTEM (PGS)

The Buffalo Public Schools' professional growth system is a web-based software application that enables the management of all professional development and training resources. This allows for anytime, anywhere access for all employees. The professional growth system supports comprehensive professional development by providing individual employees a one-stop-shop to register for courses.

Teachers and administrators with NYSED Professional Certification must accrue a set number of hours of professional development in a five-year period. The professional growth system, which not only catalogues the District's professional growth opportunities (PLO) from meetings to Teacher Center courses, also keeps track of a teacher or administrator's professional growth record. Staff can check courses taken and credit awarded.

VIRTUAL DELIVERY

All professional development delivered to teachers, administrators, and support staff during school year 2020-21 will be conducted online, whether through a live, virtual session using Microsoft Teams, or through a self-paced medium such as Play Posit.

In order to effectively prepare staff to take part in virtual professional development, the Department of Staff Development and the Department of Instructional Technology will conduct "Tech Checks." These sessions prepare staff to use the features of Microsoft Teams that allow them to engage as a participant and create a meeting. Tech Checks will be offered for administrators and teachers throughout August and during the Superintendent Conference Days in September. More advanced professional development will also be offered to prepare teachers to use Teams as a conferencing platform for instructional delivery.

SUMMER PD CATALOGUE AND CALENDAR

Virtual professional development has been offered throughout the spring and summer. The current focus is to prepare teachers and administrators to for the opening of school year 2020-21. Offerings include virtual Tech Checks for teachers and administrators, best practices in remote learning, Restorative Practices, Language

Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling (LETRS), culturally and linguistically responsive practices, and programmatic training for teachers of elementary social studies and coaches of elementary mathematics.

SUPERINTENDENT CONFERENCE DAYS SEPTEMBER 2020

Superintendent Conference Days (SCD) are opportunities for districts to provide professional development to staff members. Students do not report on SCD. This September, the District will use the SCD on September 1, 2 and 3 to provide staff with training in areas that will enable a safe and healthy start to the new year and ensure that staff are prepared to facilitate instruction using District technology. Topics include social-emotional learning, culturally and linguistically responsive initiatives, best practices in remote learning, Schoology, Microsoft Teams, and numerous other technology sessions. Instructional technology coaches will be available each day to answer questions and provide support for teachers as they plan for the new school year. Principals will also have time with staff during SCD to review roles and responsibilities and prepare for the opening of school.

See Appendix E of the Buffalo Public School's Reopening Plan 2020-21 for further information on SCD.

INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNOLOGY COACHES

The BPS also has a team of Instructional Technology Coaches (ITCs) who support teachers and administrators at their assigned buildings and across the District. Throughout the school year, the ITCs provide support and training with a specific focus on the integration of technology into both the curriculum and the method of instruction. Since the pandemic, the ITC team has provided live, remote training sessions (with archived videos) for teachers each week on the use of instructional applications and other technology tools/platforms that support learning. These sessions will continue through the next school year. There will be several sessions provided during the first two weeks of school with content focused on technology imperative to the first two weeks of school. Some of this content includes, but is not limited to, Schoology, Microsoft Teams, Infinite Campus, Nearpod/Digital Citizenship curriculum, and basics of computer use.

MENTOR TEACHERS

Buffalo Public Schools Teacher Mentoring program builds relationships that encourage and support an understanding of District expectations, achievements of personal and professional goals, development of sound practices that lead to high quality instruction for all students, and a favorable rate of new staff retention.

Mentor services are available to teachers in their first three years of teaching within the Buffalo Public Schools. After initial contact, mentors will work with teachers in a variety of ways. The mentor teacher and mentee teacher relationship is one of strict confidence.

ONGOING IMPROVEMENT

The re-opening of schools following a global pandemic is both a daunting and humbling endeavor. The BPS is aware of the incredible importance of this plan to families and staff and the ongoing need for community input. The District encourages stakeholders to continue to email administrators with their ideas and concerns related to the remote learning model.

