



TWIGGS COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Generating Excellence: One Team...One Goal

2020-2021 School Year Frequently Asked Questions

Updated August 5, 2020

Virtual Distance Learning

Q. What is the plan for educating students for the 2020-2021 school year?

A. The district has considered many plans. During the first nine weeks of the 2020-2021 school year, due to the current situation with significant spread of COVID-19, instruction will begin with distance learning at home for the first 9 weeks of school.

Q. How did the district come up with the plan for the new school year?

A. To plan for the new school year, District leadership considered the guidance of the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE), Georgia Department of Public Health (GDPH), Centers for Disease Control (CDC), The Georgia High School Association, Governor Kemp's executive orders, Twiggs County and North Central District Health Department, parent input and our local Board of Education. The GaDOE document, "Georgia's Path to Recovery for K-12 Schools" has been much of our guidance as we plan for returning to instruction safely. In addition, school principals gave input and helped determine possible situations. We work closely with our operations, transportation, nutrition, and purchasing departments, as well, to plan for custodial schedules, busing, and attainment of necessary Personal Protection Equipment (PPE).

Q. Do the schools have a plan for returning to the buildings for instruction?

A. The district has a Phased Reopening Plan that does progress towards returning fully to the buildings for on-campus instruction which is based on the Covid-19 situation at the time of consideration for each phase.

Q. What is the plan for virtual learning?

A. Google Classroom is a digital learning platform, which teachers will use to interact with their students online. Teachers use this tool to create classes, provide instruction, distribute assignments, give tests, send feedback, and see everything in one place. The teachers will have meetings with groups and individuals through Google Meets. The district has also purchased an online learning support system, Edgenuity, which provides virtual courses and is aligned to Georgia Standards. We will also utilize all the resources the district has in the instruction. We will continue to utilize Educational Epiphany next-generation instructional materials to support the Georgia Standards by introducing key terms, utilizing a teacher model, guided practice, group practice, independent practice, and a variety of formative and summative assessments.

Q. What is Edgenuity?

A. Edgenuity provides direct instruction videos that feature expert on-screen teachers who explain concepts, model strategies, provide examples and make real-world applications using a variety of tools and resources. There is an option we have, My Path, where the objective is to facilitate and optimize student learning by meeting each student where he or she is in reading and math.



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Q. What will I need while students are participating in virtual learning?

A. Students will need:

- a device that will connect to the internet at home
- have internet access at home
- be available for instruction during normal school hours
- log-in and participate in the class to be counted as present for the day
- meet all normal academic and attendance requirements
- take state-mandated tests if required
- and be enrolled in the Twiggs County Public School system

Q. Will the district provide devices to students in distance learning?

A. The district will provide one device per household who expresses a need and applies online. After you apply online to receive a device, a time will be scheduled for you to pick up the device the week before classes begin. The parent/guardian applying for the device will be responsible for the device and any repairs that may become necessary.

Q. Will there be affordable internet options?

A. At this time, the district has been working with outside sources and as we receive further information, we will update the families of Twiggs County. Any options will not be through the school system, however, the school system will assist with connecting you to outside vendors. In previous surveys, those who responded indicated that 80% of them had access to devices and internet in some way.

Q. Will students have to enroll in a Virtual Learning program to participate with online instruction?

A. No, all students who are registered in Twiggs County Public Schools will be receiving instruction virtually for the first 9 weeks of school. If your student has registered with the school system, there is no further registration required for online learning. If you have not registered your student for school with Twiggs County Public School, you will need to contact the board office to register your student for school.

Q. How will students log into virtual learning?

A. Students and parents will be provided login information with a simple ID and password to login.

Q. I have more than one child who will be learning online. Will each need a device?

A. It may be easier for every child in your household to have their own device, but it is not required. A student does not need to be on a device for the entire day. There are assignments that can be completed offline and other activities that will be completed offline. You may have to have one student online while another is completing assignments offline and schedule times for your students to virtually meet with their teachers at different times.



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Q. Will virtual students have the ability to meet with their teachers for assistance after school hours?

A. The availability of teacher support after hours will be based on the teacher's individual schedule, just as it is for on-campus school.

Q. Will teachers have the ability to review the student's work and/or grade it?

A. Yes, teachers will use the digital learning platform to review student work, grade student work, provide feedback on student work, and review learning to make needed adjustments.

Q. Will students be provided textbooks?

A. Students will not be given textbooks while they are online. All assignments and resources will be online.

Q. Will the students online be learning at the same pace they would have if they were on campus?

A. Students who attend in a virtual learning environment will have much the same experience with learning as they would have in the regular classroom. They will be following the same standards, curriculum, and pacing guides as we have done in the past. Just as lessons vary by teacher from classroom to classroom, one can expect some differences in the learning because each class and each student progresses at different levels. The learning online will be just as rigorous as on-campus instruction and will be just as personalized as on-campus instruction. Teachers are expected to provide quality instruction online just as they would in the classroom. The teachers will maintain a challenging environment to meet the needs of all students.

Q. Why are students not participating in extracurricular activities during the online instruction?

A. Extracurricular activities are for students who attend school on campus. The decision to move to online learning was not an easy decision; however, it was made to provide the safest environment possible during a time of substantial spread of the Covid-19 virus. If we feel it is necessary to limit contact by moving to online learning, then it is necessary to remove the contact students would encounter through extracurricular activities as well. The safety of the students in Twiggs County Schools was the driving factor for the decision.

Q. Will my children be required to be on the computer from 8:00 AM to 3:15 PM like normal school time?

A. Students will not be required to be on the computer the entire school day. Teachers will provide schedules for daily Google Classroom video conferencing lessons, and students will be provided assignments to work on when they are not attending video instruction. Students will be expected to attend daily video lessons and complete assigned work by due dates.

Q. How will student attendance be counted during Online Instruction?

A. The district is required to take student attendance and report student attendance data to the Georgia Department of Education. Some examples of how virtual attendance is tracked:

- We will track student duration in online courses and time spent in the online classroom/platform.
- We will track student log-in into the online platform.
- We will track student attendance during live virtual instruction.
- We will track student submission of assignments and student/teacher interactions.



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Q. If I am a single parent who works, how will my child receive instruction?

A. The learning experience can be accessed by the caregiver you have caring for your child while you are working.

Q. Will students be able to graduate on time?

A. The student schedule will be set up in much the same way it is on campus. They will be able to obtain all the credits needed to graduate on time if they are completing their assignments on time and completely with passing grades.

Q. Will students be provided with a course schedule with times they should be working on a particular subject?

A. Students will be given a course schedule of times to meet with their teachers for lessons and support. Students will also work on assignments independently at other times.

Q. Will students be provided a course syllabus that reflects the percentage of the assignments and exams?

A. Students will receive information about assignments and grading expectations during the first opening of each course/class.

Q. Will the assignments and exams be weighted with the same percentages as they would be on campus?

A. Yes, grading weights will be the same as stated in the student handbook.

Q. Will there be elective courses and CTAE courses?

A. Yes, there will be elective courses and CTAE courses.

Q. Will there be foreign language courses?

A. Yes, there will be foreign language courses.

Q. Will my student be able to participate in dual enrollment?

A. Yes, students will have the opportunity to enroll in dual enrollment courses. The dual enrollment courses will be online for at least the first nine weeks.

Q. Will the online teachers work for Twiggs County Public Schools?

A. Yes, the teachers who deliver the distance learning through Google Classroom work for the district. These teachers will utilize many different resources and some of those resources will have a video of another professionally certified teacher presenting the material. The teacher from Twiggs County is the one who is responsible for the learning experience for your student.



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Services for Students with Disabilities

Q. Will there be support for students who need special education, ELL, IEP services, speech, gifted instruction, etc.?

A. Yes, students will receive their support services. In IEP meeting may be held to determine most appropriate services.

Q. Will transportation be provided to students who attend school in other settings such as Georgia Academy for the Blind?

A. Yes, special transportation situations will resume, but with specific additional safety protocols.

Q. How will the students on an IEP or 504 receive their services?

A. The learning platforms we are using have the ability to meet the needs of the IEPs of our students. Students receiving other services such as speech and physical therapy have already been on a plan to receive services online and these services will continue in a virtual format.

Q. What services will IEP students receive?

A. If your child has been identified as needing in IEP, your child will receive those services. Teachers are reviewing their caseloads and the student IEPs. The teacher will contact you and discuss how these services will be met. The Edgenuity platform has the ability to serve students with an IEP. Teachers will be trained and supplied with resources to ensure the needs of all students are met. As the teachers transition back into the school year they will receive training to completely meet the IEP for each student. It is the desire of Twigg County Schools to meet the needs of each and every student. Each program will look different. We are committed to serve our students however that may look.

Pre-K

Q. Is Pre-K available for my child this year?

A. Yes, registration is open for Pre-K and we still have slots open at this time. Enroll from 8:30-3:30 each day beginning July 27, 2020 at the board office.

Q. How will Pre-K students learn during virtual instruction?

A. The Pre-K will follow all the expectations for DECAL. Their school day will look like a usual school day. They will have circle times with instruction, small group times, center times, literacy times, as well as outdoor play. This will be done through videos that will be prepared in advance and shared with the families as well as live video interaction at times with each student. We are exploring additional options for Pre-K students to access their learning experience.



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Q. Will my Pre-K student need supplies?

A. Pre-K students will have supplies delivered from the bus as it delivers meals each day, or you can pick up these materials at the school.

Testing

Q. Will virtual students take state-mandated tests like Milestones?

A. Yes, all students will be expected to take any state-mandated tests if they are required.

Q. How will students take the state-mandated tests?

A. The Georgia Department of Education has requested waivers for state-mandated testing for this 2020-2021 school year. However, these waivers have not been approved at this time by the U. S. Department of education. If students are required to take state-mandated tests, the district will provide parents with information regarding taking the assessments and any accommodations.

School Calendar

Q. Why is school starting later than planned?

A. It is important for Twiggs County Schools to provide the safest and most appropriate learning situation for our students and workplace for our staff. With the uncertainty and ever-changing situation with Covid-19, we thought it was important to take a couple more weeks to be sure the buildings are prepared and to ensure the teachers are well trained to teach in this new environment. Teachers everywhere are being asked to learn a different way to engage students. This learning takes time for our staff in much the same way as learning takes time for students.

Q. What does the school calendar look like for 2020-2021 school year?

A. Learning experiences for students (first day of school online) will begin on August 17, 2020. The first grading period will end October 9, 2020. The calendar will continue to follow the scheduled holidays and breaks as previously approved. The students were scheduled to have fall break October 12-16. The second grading period will begin when students resume instruction after fall break. The second grading period (end of first semester) will be December 18, 2020. Students return to instruction January 5, 2021. Please note that the calendar and learning environment is subject to change with Board approval. We have published a phased reopening plan. The revised approved detailed calendar will be published soon.

Open House / Meet and Greet

Q. Will Meet and Greets be held in person?

A. Open House and Meet and Greets will be offered this year in creative ways. The schools have some exciting ways to make this a special beginning to a new year. Each school will be in touch with their families to communicate the plan specific to their school.



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Nutrition Program

Q. Will students receive meals while they are distance learning?

A. Yes, students will receive meals while the district is implementing 100% virtual learning options. The meals will be delivered every day through school buses. This will look different than the meals provided March through May. The meals beginning August 17th will be provided to students enrolled in Twigg County Public Schools only. Each bus will have a roster of students and only those students will receive the meals and their names will be checked each day. Each day a student will receive a breakfast and a lunch that will be delivered together at the same time. We provide a variety of menu items, including student favorites such as pizza and hot sandwiches such as hamburger and chicken.

Communication

Q. What communication tools will teachers use to stay in touch with students and parents?

A. Email and phone calls will be the most common forms of communication.

Q. How will we have parent-teacher conferences?

A. Parent-teacher conferences may be scheduled virtually using Google Meets or may be held by phone conference.

Q. How will parents access the most current information?

A. Please visit the school and district websites for the most current information. Information will be available on Facebook as well.

Q. If I am not receiving the automated calls from the district, how do I update my contact information to receive calls in the future?

A. Please update your contact information in Infinite Campus. You can check the information through your student's record in the parent portal. You must first have an account to access your student's record in this parent portal. If you need an account, directions are also provided for first-time users. The school or the technology department can assist as well. We will set up parent training virtually as well. It is important that your child's information is updated because teachers will rely on the accurate information to communicate with you concerning your student's education. We need updated addresses and phone numbers. The schools will also request this updated information and will verify it in Infinite Campus. If your phone number changes, please provide an updated number as soon as it changes. Please provide an updated email address as well.