Comparison of Distance Learning Plans Among Washington Area Board of Education (WABE) Districts

Research Methodology

EAB Researchers Reviewed Publicly Available Information on Distance Learning Plans from WABE Districts

EAB researchers identified publicly available information on distance learning plans from districts in the Washington Area Board of Education (WABE): **Alexandria City Public Schools**, **Arlington County Public Schools**, **Fairfax County Public Schools**, **Falls Church City Public Schools**, **Loudoun County Public Schools**, **Manassas City Public Schools**, **Manassas Park City Schools**, **Montgomery County Public Schools**, **Prince George's County Public Schools**, and **Prince William County Public Schools**. Specifically, EAB researchers reported on the following components of distance learning plans (published by districts as of April 7, 2020): instructional time guidelines, availability of printed instructional packets, resources for parents/caregivers, grading, assessment, and attendance.

Instructional Time

Eight of Ten Profiled Districts Establish Some Instructional Time Guidance for Students During Distance Learning

Administrators at eight of the ten profiled districts set specific instructional time recommendations in distance learning plans:

- **Alexandria City Public Schools**' **Learning Activity Packets**;

- **Fairfax County Public Schools**' **Distance Learning Plan** (pages 15, 17, 19);

- **Loudoun County Public Schools**' **Continuity of Education Plan** (page three);

- **Manassas City Public Schools**' **Update on Distance Learning**;

- **Manassas Park City Schools**' **COVID-19 Continuous Learning Plan** (pages eight, nine, 11);

- **Montgomery County Public Schools**' **Elementary Information** and **Middle and High School Information** web pages. On the web page **Continuity of Learning**, district administrators indicate that individual secondary schools will distribute their own schedules. To that end, EAB researchers sourced instructional time guidance from **Benjamin Banneker Middle School** and **Damascus High School** in the district;

- **Prince George's County Public Schools**' [**Continuity of Learning**](#) web page;
- **Prince William County Public Schools**' [**Home Learning**](#) web page (see "Optional Daily Schedules").

In this report, EAB researchers defined "instructional time" as time spent on core content areas (i.e., English language arts (ELA)/reading, math, science, social studies) and—if the information was available—time spent on specials (e.g., physical education (PE), art, music, etc.). See the table on **pages three to five** of this report for daily instructional time recommendations at each of the above districts.

Profiled Districts Recommend a Minimum of One Instructional Hour for Pre-K Students

Administrators at three profiled districts—**Fairfax County Public Schools**, **Manassas Park City Schools**, and **Prince William County Public Schools**— recommend a minimum of one instructional hour for pre-K students. Administrators at the seven other profiled districts do not set a recommendation of instructional time for pre-K students.

Profiled Districts Recommend between 1 and 2.5 Hours for Elementary Students

Across the five profiled districts that provide overall daily instructional time recommendations for elementary students—**Fairfax County Public Schools**, **Loudoun County Public Schools**, **Manassas Park City Schools**, **Montgomery County Public Schools**, and **Prince William County Public Schools**— administrators recommend between 1 and 2.5 hours (i.e., 60-150 minutes) each day.

Profiled Districts Recommend 30 to 45 Minutes Per Subject Area Each Day for Secondary Students

At **Fairfax County Public Schools**, **Loudoun County Public Schools**, **Manassas Park City Schools**, and **Prince William County Public Schools**, administrators recommend between 30 and 45 minutes per subject area.

- At **Fairfax County Public Schools**, administrators recommend that middle school students complete 3 hours of instruction, which includes 2.5 hours combined for four subject areas. This averages 37.5 minutes per subject area, if divided evenly.

- At **Loudoun County Public Schools**, administrators recommend that secondary students spend up to 30 minutes per course.

- At **Manassas Park City Schools**, administrators recommend that middle school students complete 3 hours of instruction, which includes 2.5 hours combined for four subject areas (averages 37.5 minutes per subject area) and 30 minutes for specials.

- At **Montgomery County Public Schools**, administrators recommend that secondary students complete at least 135-180 daily minutes of instruction, including 45 minutes per subject area for three to four subject areas.

- At **Prince William County Public Schools**, administrators recommend that secondary students complete 2.5 hours of instruction, including 1 hour combined for social studies and science and 1.5 hour combined for English and math.

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Daily Instructional Time Guidance at Profiled Districts

District	Elementary (K-5)	Secondary (6-12)
Alexandria City Public Schools*	• 30-60 minutes of reading • *Administrators do not provide instructional time guidance for other subject areas* • **Asynchronous only**: Learning packets by grade offer asynchronous activities/tasks. Administrators do not explicitly state that the district will provide synchronous learning opportunities for students	• **Middle School and High School**: At least 1 hour of reading • *Administrators do not provide instructional time guidance for other subject areas* • **Asynchronous only**: Learning packet offers asynchronous activities/tasks. Administrators do not explicitly state that the district will provide synchronous learning opportunities for students
Fairfax County Public Schools	• At least 75 minutes (i.e., 60-90 minutes combined for language arts and math; no time recommendation for science and social studies; 15-45 minutes combined for specials) • **Asynchronous and synchronous**: Students complete weekly learning packets. Students meet virtually with their class at scheduled times. As part of synchronous learning, students also engage with learning content presented through television on Channel 21.	• **Middle School**: 3 hours (i.e., 2.5 hours combined for language arts, math, science, and social studies; 30 minutes combined for specials) • **Asynchronous and synchronous**: Students complete asynchronous work independently or collaboratively. Students meet virtually with their class at scheduled times. • **High School**: 3 hours *(administrators do not break down instructional time guidance by subject area)* • **Asynchronous and synchronous**: Students complete asynchronous work independently or collaboratively. Students meet virtually with their class at scheduled times.
Loudoun County Public Schools	• **K-2**: Up to 60 minutes total • **3-5**: Up to 90 minutes total • *Administrators do not break down instructional time guidance by subject area* • **Asynchronous and synchronous**: Teachers of students in grades 3-5 will provide synchronous and asynchronous instruction starting April 15, 2020. Teachers of K-2 students may provide optional synchronous learning opportunities. Administrators do not break down instructional time guidance by asynchronous versus synchronous learning	• **Middle School and High School**: Up to 30 minutes per class (up to 3-4 total cumulative hours) • **Asynchronous and synchronous**: Teachers of secondary students will provide asynchronous and synchronous instruction starting April 15, 2020. Administrators do not break down instructional time guidance by asynchronous versus synchronous learning
Manassas City Public Schools*	• **5**: (per week) more than 90 minutes per class (i.e., one, 30-minute video lesson per class; one, 30-minute assignment per class; one, 30-minute "live" class interaction)	• **Middle School and High School**: (per week) more than 90 minutes per class (i.e., one, 30-minute video lesson per class; one, 30-minute assignment per class; one, 30-minute "live" class interaction)

	• **Asynchronous and synchronous:** "Live" class interactions represent synchronous learning. Administrators do not specify whether the 30-minute video lesson is synchronous or asynchronous. Administrators do not specify the number of classes that students take during this time—thus, administrators do not provide overall daily instructional time guidance	• **Asynchronous and synchronous:** "Live" class interactions represent synchronous learning. Administrators do not specify whether the 30-minute video lesson is synchronous or asynchronous. Administrators do not specify the number of classes that students take during this time—thus, administrators do not provide overall daily instructional time guidance
Manassas Park City Schools	• At least 1 hour total • *Administrators do not break down instructional time guidance by subject area* • **Asynchronous only**: Administrators do not explicitly state that the district will provide synchronous learning opportunities for students	• **Middle School**: 3 hours (i.e., 2.5 hours combined for language arts, math, science, and social studies; 30 minutes for specials) • **Asynchronous and synchronous**: Students meet virtually with class at scheduled times and complete asynchronous work outside of "live" meetings. Administrators do not break down instructional time guidance by asynchronous versus synchronous learning • **High School**: 3 hours *(administrators do not break down instructional time guidance by subject area)* • **Asynchronous and synchronous**: Students meet virtually with class at scheduled times and complete asynchronous work outside of "live" meetings. Administrators do not break down instructional time guidance by asynchronous versus synchronous learning
Montgomery County Public Schools	• **K-2**: 1.5-2 hours • **3-5**: 2.5-3 hours • *Administrators do not break down instructional time guidance by subject area* • **Asynchronous and synchronous**: Administrators divide instructional time into three areas: students view central lessons (administrators do not specify whether these lessons are asynchronous or synchronous), join "live" time with the teacher, and complete independent work. Administrators do not break down instructional time guidance by asynchronous versus synchronous learning	• **Middle School**: At least 135-180 minutes (i.e., 45 minutes per subject area for three to four subject areas each day) • **Asynchronous and synchronous**: Students access on-demand content and attend "live" check-ins with teachers. Administrators do not break down instructional time guidance by asynchronous versus synchronous learning • **High School**: At least 135-180 minutes (i.e., 45 minutes per subject area for three to four subject areas each day) • **Asynchronous and synchronous**: Teachers post pre-recorded instruction and may choose to also present synchronous content. Administrators do not break down instructional time

		guidance by asynchronous versus synchronous learning
Prince George's County Public Schools*	• At least 60 minutes (i.e., two 30- to 45-minute virtual lessons, either *math and science* or *reading and social studies*) • **Asynchronous and potentially synchronous**: Students experience the two virtual lessons between the hours of 9 am and 1 pm. Administrators do not specify whether these virtual lessons are asynchronous or synchronous. Administrators do not break down instructional time guidance by asynchronous versus synchronous learning	• **Middle School and High School**: At least 30 minutes (one 30- to 45-minute lesson, on English, math, science, or social studies) • **Asynchronous and potentially synchronous**: Students experience the virtual lesson between the hours of 9 am and 1 pm. Administrators do not specify whether these virtual lessons are asynchronous or synchronous. Administrators do not break down instructional time guidance by asynchronous versus synchronous learning
Prince William County Public Schools	• 2.5 hours (i.e., 1 hour combined for math and science/social studies; 1.5 hour for language arts and science/social studies) • **Asynchronous only**: In sample daily schedules, administrators do not discuss synchronous learning opportunities	• **Middle School and High School**: 2.5 hours (i.e., 1 hour combined for social studies and science; 1.5 hour combined for English and math) • **Asynchronous only**: In sample daily schedules, administrators do not discuss synchronous learning opportunities

*Administrators at these districts do not provide overall daily instructional time guidance for students. Instead, administrators at these districts only provide time recommendations for one or two subject areas (e.g., reading, math). Thus, the listed time recommendation in the above table likely underestimates the amount of total time administrators expect students to dedicate to academic learning.

Administrators at **Arlington Public Schools** and **Falls Church City Public Schools** have not yet provided instructional time recommendations for students during distance learning. EAB researchers note that administrators at these districts will likely publish these plans later in April.

- Contacts at **Arlington Pubic School District** report that administrators plan to publish distance learning plans for elementary and secondary students on April 9, 2020.

- Administrators at **Falls Church City Public Schools**—in their **March 27, 2020** update—state that teachers will participate in a professional development day on April 13, 2020 to finalize their instructional plans for distance learning.

Profiled Districts Do Not Cite Research-Based Best Practice on Instructional Time in Distance Learning

No profiled district has cited research-based best practices on instructional time allocation in a distance learning context. Notably, administrators at **Falls Church City Public Schools**—in their **March 27, 2020** and **March 24, 2020** updates—do emphasize that expecting students to be synchronously engaged on the computer for 6.5 hours via distance learning "is not sound instructional practice or learning practice." Rather, administrators aim to prioritize student engagement—thus, administrators design instructional time to comprise a blend of synchronous and asynchronous instructional sessions, supplemented with self-directed work on assignments.

Profiled Districts that Offer Both Synchronous and Asynchronous Instruction Do Not Differentiate Instructional Time Allocation for Each Type

Administrators at **Fairfax County Public Schools** (pages 15, 17, 19), **Loudoun County Public Schools** (page four), **Manassas City Public Schools**, **Manassas Park City Schools** (pages eight, nine), **Montgomery County Public Schools**, and **Prince George's County Public Schools** state that students will receive some form of synchronous instruction (e.g., learning that occurs in real-time). Administrators at these profiled districts define synchronous instruction as: (1) students meet virtually with their class at a scheduled time, (2) students receive "live" instruction from teachers, and/or (3) students attend "live" office hours.

- At **Fairfax County Public Schools**, administrators expect Pre-K-12 students to meet virtually with their class at scheduled times. Students may also attend office hours.

- At **Loudoun County Public Schools**, teachers of grades 3-12 will offer both synchronous and asynchronous learning opportunities through Google Classroom. Teachers of K-2 may choose to offer optional synchronous learning opportunities. Students may also attend office hours.

- At **Manassas City Public Schools**, teachers will provide one, 30-minute "live, touch-base opportunity time" for the entire class each week.

- At **Manassas Park City Schools**, administrators expect students in grades 6-12 to meet virtually with their class at scheduled times. Students may also attend office hours.

- At **Montgomery County Public Schools**, administrators expect students to attend "live time" with the teacher.

- At **Prince George's County Public Schools**, students may attend office hours.

Administrators at the above profiled districts do not specify the breakdown of instructional time for synchronous versus asynchronous activities. As districts further hone their distance learning plans in the coming weeks, districts may publish more detailed guidance regarding time spent on each form of learning.

Printed Instructional Packets

Consider Delivering Printed Instructional Packets to Students at Meal Pickup Sites

Administrators at five profiled districts—**Arlington Public Schools**, **Fairfax County Public Schools**, **Loudoun County Public Schools**, **Manassas City Public Schools**, and **Prince George's County Public Schools**—explicitly state that administrators will provide hard-copy instructional packets for students and parents. Administrators at **Arlington Public Schools**, **Loudoun County Public Schools**, **Manassas City Public Schools**, and **Prince George's County Public Schools** do not provide information on the components of these instructional packets to the same extent as do administrators at **Fairfax County Public Schools**. Based on available information on instructional packets, administrators at **Fairfax County Public Schools** appear to provide the most comprehensive instructional packets (e.g., in the range of subject areas covered).

- Administrators at **Fairfax County Public Schools** state that teachers will mail printed instructional packets to pre-K-8 students. Students in pre-K-6 receive

instructional packets that focus on literacy and math with interdisciplinary connections to science and social studies. Students in grades 7-8 receive instructional packets that focus on all four core content areas (i.e., language arts, math, science, social studies). Students with special needs receive instructional packets that reflect a specialized curriculum **(pages four to five)**.

- Administrators at **Arlington Public Schools**, in their **March 13, 2020** update, state that some schools had distributed instructional materials for students in pre-K-5 in hard copy. It is not immediately clear if administrators are continuing to distribute printed instructional materials to students this month. Administrators do not specify the subject areas covered by the instructional packets.

- Administrators at **Loudoun County Public Schools** state that teachers will mail printed instructional packets for English and math to students in K-2 every other week, starting April 15, 2020 **(page four)**.

- Administrators at **Manassas City Public Schools** state that they will mail instructional packets to all pre-K-8 students. Administrators do not specify the subject areas covered by the instructional packets.

- Administrators at **Prince George's County Public Schools** will provide printed instructional materials for all elementary and secondary students at student meal sites. Administrators do not specify the subject areas covered by the instructional packets.

As profiled in the Center on Reinventing Public Education's public, evolving **database**, at least 10 other districts use the same approach as **Prince George's County Public Schools**. At **Baltimore City Public Schools** (MD), **Baltimore County Public Schools** (MD), **Boston Public Schools** (MA), **Cincinnati Public Schools** (OH), **Detroit Public Schools** (MI), **Kansas City Public Schools** (KS), **Milwaukee Public Schools** (WI), **Rochester City School District** (NY), **Saint Louis Public Schools** (MO), **Seattle Public Schools** (WA), administrators distribute printed instructional packets at meal pick-up sites.

Resources for Parents/Caregivers

Offer Offline Enrichment Activities for Younger Students and Guidance on Navigating Digital Platforms

Administrators may consider providing ideas for online enrichment activities to supplement teacher-assigned tasks and suggestions for offline enrichment activities aimed at younger students. Further, administrators may consider publishing parent-facing guidance on how to use specific digital devices and navigate relevant online platforms (e.g., learning management system (LMS)) to ensure a smooth transition to distance learning.

On the next page, EAB researchers present sample resources from some profiled districts.

Sample Academic Resources for Parents Provided at Profiled Districts

District	Resource	Overview of Resource
Recommendations for Additional Enrichment Activities		
Arlington Public Schools	• **Educational Resources for Families** • **Family Activities for Learning**	• Provides online resources (e.g., video channel for read aloud, virtual museum tours, Netflix educational shows) by subject area • Offers suggestions for offline enrichment activities aimed at younger students (e.g., host a spelling contest, start a baking project)
Fairfax County Public Schools	• **Keeping Your Children Occupied While Schools are Closed**	*See above*
Loudoun County Public Schools	Digital resources for families with students in: • **Elementary School** • **Middle School** • **High School**	*See above*
Montgomery County Public Schools	• **Engagement Resources**	*See above*
Guidance on Digital Devices and Online Platforms		
Alexandria City Public Schools	• **Chromebook and Online Learning Support for Students and Families**	• Provides user guidance on Chromebook, Zoom, Google Drive, etc.
Manassas Park City Schools	• **Creating a Parent Account in Canvas**	• Guides parents to create an account, check grades, and navigate other functions of the LMS
Montgomery County Public Schools	• **Tours of myMCPS Classroom**	• Provides virtual tours of the district's LMS

Provide Resources Around Staying Healthy and Safe During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Administrators may consider providing parents with strategies to communicate COVID-19 information with their children and tactics to reduce stress and anxiety during this time.

Sample Non-Academic Resources for Parents Provided by Profiled Districts

District	Resource	Overview of Resource
		•
Alexandria City Public Schools	**Informational Webinars on COVID-19**	• Features panelists such as representatives from local health organizations and district leaders
Fairfax County Public Schools	**Trainings that Adults Should Consider Completing**	• Links to free, online trainings on topics such as trauma awareness and resiliency
Falls Church City Public Schools	**Mental Health & Stress Reduction Support**	• Offers strategies for parents and students alike to stay safe, healthy, and calm during the pandemic
Manassas Park City Schools	**Talking to Children About the Virus**	• Provides strategies to inform children of COVID-19 and reduce their anxiety

Grading and Assessment

VDOE Recommends Against Grading Student Work During Distance Learning

On the web page **COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions**, the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) states that local school districts have the authority to award grades and determine grade point averages (GPAs). To that end, VDOE does not mandate how districts should approach grading and assessment during this time of distance learning. However, VDOE recommends that teachers do not grade student work completed during this period of distance learning for reasons related to equity.

In the **Guidance Document for Consideration in Awarding Pass/Fail Credit**, the Virginia School Boards Association (VSBA) and Virginia Association of School Superintendents (VASS) jointly state that "as teachers and others decide final grades for students, during an extraordinary time, collectively during this process the work must convey hope and encouragement for students and not be an additional burden or source of stress." If administrators were to assign traditional A-F grades for work completed during distance learning, administrators may cause additional stress for students during an already-stressful time.

Instead of Assigning Grades for Student Work, Teachers Should Consider Alternative Approaches to Delivering Feedback

Administrators at **Alexandria City Public Schools**, **Arlington Public Schools**, **Manassas Park City Schools**, and **Prince William County Public Schools** state that teachers will not grade student work during distance learning. However, administrators at **Manassas Park City Schools** and **Prince William County Public Schools** still expect teachers to provide meaningful feedback on student work to

measure individual progress. Administrators should encourage teachers to provide feedback on student work—through qualitative feedback and/or through numeric values that do not translate to report card grades—to monitor student progress and growth during distance learning.

- Administrators at **Alexandria City Public Schools**—on the web page **Frequently Asked Questions**—state that "no assignments will be graded during school closures at this time."

- Administrators at **Arlington Public Schools**—on the web page **Learning at Home**—state that teachers will not grade assignments.

- Administrators at **Manassas Park City Schools** state in the **COVID-19 Continuous Learning Plan** that teachers will not grade work assigned after March 13, 2020 **(page three)**. Administrators do expect teachers to provide "meaningful feedback" on student work from April 14, 2020 to the end of the school year. Administrators note that while "some of our resources may provide automatic scoring for completed work" (e.g., online activities), these scores represent "a means of measuring personal progress and should not be regarded as a grade."

- Administrators at **Prince William County Public Schools** state in the **Home Learning** web page that currently, "neither grades nor course credit will be awarded" during distance learning. However, administrators have asked teachers to provide feedback on student progress and growth. In their **March 27, 2020** update, administrators state that they will soon present a grading plan that is fair and equitable.

Notably, administrators at **Loudoun County Public Schools** state that K-12 teachers "will use the gradebook to provide feedback and track student progress" from April 15, 2020 to the end of the school year **(page six)**. For middle and high school students, teachers may choose to assign numeric values for assignments in the gradebook—for the sole purpose of tracking student progress and informing meaningful feedback on student work. Teachers will not record these grades in the report card or Student Information System (SIS).

In contrast, **Montgomery County Public Schools**, on its **Continuity of Learning** web page, states that the district's distance learning model includes "submission of graded assignments." However, administrators do not specify if teachers plan to record these grades in the SIS.

Administrators at **Falls Church City Public Schools**, **Manassas City Public Schools**, and **Prince George's County Public Schools** have not yet published explicit information on grading during distance learning.

Consider Alternatives to the Standard A-F System to Calculate Final Grades

Administrators at **Loudoun County Public Schools** plan to calculate each student's grade through three different processes and then choose the most favorable grade **(pages six to seven)**. For example, in one option—also used by administrators at **Prince George's County Public Schools**—administrators at **Loudoun County Public Schools** will average the grades from the first three quarters for the final course grade. Administrators may consider using a similar approach to ensure fair and equitable grading practices for students.

In the below table, "Q" and "S" followed by a number (i.e., 1, 2, 3) refer to the student's grade for that specific quarter and semester, respectively.

Options for Calculating Final Grades at *Loudoun County Public Schools* and *Prince George's County Public Schools*

1	**2**	**3**
Average of Q1, Q2, and Q3	**Average of S1 and Q3**	**Two Grades: One for S1 and One for Q3/Final**
Student receives a numeric grade based on the following calculation:	Student receives a numeric grade based on the following calculation:	• Student receives an S1 and a "Pass/Fail" for Q3 and for the final grade.
$(Q1 + Q2 + Q3) / 3$	$[((Q1 + Q2) / 2) + Q3] / 2$	• Administrators will not include Pass/Fail grades in student GPA calculations. Administrators will factor only S1 into GPA calculations.
Example: Q1 = 85 Q2 = 90 Q3 = 92	***Example:*** Q1 = 85 Q2 = 90 Q3 = 92	
(85 + 90 + 92) / 3 = 89	**[((85+90) / 2) + 92] / 2 = [87.5 + 92] / 2 = 89.75**	
Used by: **Loudoun County Public Schools*** and **Prince George's County Public Schools****	*Used by:* **Loudoun County Public Schools**	*Used by:* **Loudoun County Public Schools**
*Administrators will use this option for all elementary students, since they do not receive an S1. ***Students will earn a Pass or Incomplete for Q4*		

If administrators decide to offer Pass/Fail (in lieu of the standard A-F) and choose to do so on an individual basis (in lieu of providing a "blanket" Pass/Fail to all students), VSBA and VASS present methodology considerations in the **Guidance Document for Consideration in Awarding Pass/Fail Credit**.

Methodology for Offering Pass/Fail on an Individual Basis, Suggested by VSBA and VASS

Option to Elect Pass/Fail
- Pass/Fail as an option should be agreed upon by the parents and the student.
- The parents and the student should wait to consider the option of Pass/Fail after all other work completed (i.e., earlier than March 13, 2020) has been determined on the A-F scale.

Course Credit and GPA Calculation under Pass/Fail
- Administrators exclude course credit earned by passing (using Pass/Fail) from the student's GPA calculation.
- Administrators record a "P" or "F" on the student's transcript.
- Administrators award promotion/graduation credit only when the student earns a "P."

Potential Modifications to Pass/Fail Policy
- Administrators may consider excluding select courses (e.g., weighted courses, required credits for graduation) from the Pass/Fail option.
- Administrators may consider substituting an "Incomplete" in place of a "Fail" with an appropriate timeline that would allow the student to demonstrate mastery of critical standards.

Use of Grading Approach that Favors Student
- If the student's final grade in a course negatively impacts the student's GPA, administrators convert the letter grade into Pass/Fail. By using this strategy, administrators ensure no final letter grade is lower than the student's grade on March 13, 2020.
- If the student's final grade enhances the student's GPA, administrators maintain the letter grade and resulting GPA on the student's transcript.

Use Informal, Formative Assessments to Gauge Student Learning and Effectiveness of Distance Instruction

Administrators at four profiled districts explicitly state that teachers will administer assessments as a means of monitoring student learning and growth. Teachers should conduct formative assessments to gauge student understanding of specific concepts. Formative assessments do not contribute to overall grades or evaluations of students' cumulative knowledge, as do summative assessments.

- Administrators at **Arlington Public Schools** state that teachers may offer formative assessments to inform their own teaching (i.e., gauge the effectiveness of instructional activities) and monitor student progress.

- Administrators at **Fairfax County Public Schools** state that teachers will assign formative assessments related to grade-level standards for students in grades 7-12 **(pages 16, 18)**.

- Administrators at **Loudoun County Public Schools** state that "assessments should, particularly during these extenuating circumstances, foster student reflection, agency, and ownership through a growth mindset toward learning" **(page six)**.

- Administrators at **Manassas Park City Schools** state that teachers may informally assess student progress. For example, teachers can write comments on a submitted assignment, assign and review student journal entries on a

specific concept, and conduct conversations with students via phone or video **(pages 13-14)**.

Administrators may consider asking teachers to implement formative assessments through similar informal channels in use at **Manassas Park City Schools**.

As of April 2, 2020, administrators at **Alexandria City Public Schools**, **Falls Church City Public Schools**, **Montgomery County Public Schools**, **Prince George's County Public Schools**, and **Prince William County Public Schools** have not yet published information on assessments during distance learning.

Attendance

Most Profiled Districts Do Not Provide Information on Tracking Student Attendance During Distance Learning

Administrators at profiled districts do not provide information on how to monitor student attendance during distance learning.

Notably, administrators at **[Fairfax County Public Schools](#)** state that school counselors will "assist with the school's established attendance procedure and help with reaching out to students via email that aren't taking advantage of the online learning" **(page 12)**. Administrators at **Manassas Park City Schools** use identical language on **page 18** of their **[COVID-19 Continuous Learning Plan](#)**. Administrators at these two profiled districts do not provide additional information on how teachers plan to track attendance or how school counselors plan to intervene with students who demonstrate low attendance.

As of April 1, 2020, of the 85+ districts profiled in the Center on Reinventing Public Education's **[database](#)**, only seven districts—**DSST Public Schools** in Colorado, **Minneapolis Public Schools** in Minnesota, **New York City Department of Education, Orange County Public Schools** in Florida, **Pinellas County Schools** in Florida, **Polk County Public Schools** in Florida, and **Providence Public Schools** in Rhode Island—explicitly state that teachers will take attendance.

While Absenteeism Will Likely Increase During Distance Learning, Administrators May Still Consider Tracking Attendance to Monitor Student Engagement

In the article **[As Schools Move Online, Many Students Stay Logged Out](#)**, the New York Times notes that absenteeism will likely increase under distance learning. The article attributes this increase to factors such as uneven levels of technology and adult (e.g., parent, caregiver) supervision at home. Schools with many low-income students, who are more likely to have inconsistent access to home computers and internet connection, generally face higher rates of absenteeism. EAB's expert insight **[5 Logistical Considerations When Responding to COVID-19](#)** discusses how some schools have loosened policies for excused absences—these schools now accept a parent's note where they would have previously required a doctor's note.

Still, administrators may wish to track attendance to monitor student engagement and learning. The above expert insight explores strategies to monitor attendance, such as tracking logins to and activity in the LMS and checking submission of assignments. As profiled in the Center on Reinventing Public Education's **[database](#)**, teachers at **DSST Public Schools**, **Minneapolis Public Schools**, **New York City**

Department of Education, and **Pinellas County Schools** will monitor attendance during video instruction delivered through online platforms such as Google Classroom, Google Hangouts, and Microsoft Teams. At **Providence Public Schools**, administrators expect teachers to take attendance using Google Sheets.

A Guide to Districts Profiled in this Report

District	State	Approximate Enrollment
Alexandria City Public Schools	VA	15,966
Arlington County Public Schools	VA	27,434
Fairfax County Public Schools	VA	187,797
Falls Church City Public Schools	VA	2,620
Loudoun County Public Schools	VA	81,906
Manassas City Public Schools	VA	7,723
Manassas Park City Schools	VA	3,724
Montgomery County Public Schools	MD	162,680
Prince George's County Public Schools	MD	132,657
Prince William County Public Schools	VA	90,843