

2021-2022 MCS Return to Learn

Attention: McDowell County Schools Families, Staff and Stakeholders

Please take a few moments to read our LEA Safe Return to In-Person Instruction Plan for the 2021-2022 School Year.

Return to In-Person Learning
McDowell County Schools

2021-2022

McDowell County Schools is operating in-person for the 2021-2022 academic year. The first day for students is August 23, 2021.

McDowell County Public Schools (MCS) believes that an in-person school setting is the best place for students to learn and grow academically, socially, emotionally, and physically. The MCS plan has all students (kindergarten through twelfth grade) attending school in-person five days per week.

MCS recognizes that for some students and families, the return to in-person learning can be a difficult decision. MCS has put the McDowell Virtual Academy (MVA) in place for 2021-2022 as a way to offer an alternative school option. MVA will serve as a long-term solution for students who choose to learn away from a traditional campus, leveraging the comprehensive resources of McDowell County Schools at no cost to the family. Licensed MCS teachers ensure students have the best chance to succeed academically and feel connected to a community of learners within the virtual environment. Students have access to courses from North Carolina Virtual Public Schools (NCVPS), Edgenuity, North Carolina School of Science and Mathematics (NCSSM), and community college courses from McDowell Technical Community College.

MCS recognizes that social emotional learning is needed for many students in addition to academic recovery and acceleration. Strategies include high quality professional development for staff, increased use of assessment data to guide instruction, research-based core instruction, and tiered systems of support for interventions.

All MCS students will receive breakfast and lunch at no cost for the 2021/2022 school year. Free and reduced meal program applications will be available for families to complete that allow families to qualify for other important services.

The MCS transportation department provides school transportation to our students. In conjunction with guidance from DPI and NCDHHS, we will provide a safe, economic, and efficient method of bus transportation. Face coverings on buses and other school transportation will be required per federal guidelines. Our bus routes will run on a normal schedule with buses operating at full capacity.

MCS will continue safety and sanitation protocols throughout our buildings for the 2021-2022 school year and will follow NCDHHS guidelines.

MCS partners with the Foothills Health District, school nurses, community agency mental health providers, and other agencies to improve services and support for families and students. Counselors, social workers, mental health and other specialized staff will be available to support our students as we return to school after COVID.

MCS provides laptops to all students. MCS seeks to increase the locations within our community where adequate internet can be attained. The district will continue working with community partners in an effort to expand access to high speed broadband in underserved/unserved areas of the county.

The McDowell County Board of Education's decision to operate the district during the 2021-2022 school year will be reviewed, at a minimum, during each monthly board session. The Board will review school and community metrics that will help guide future decisions.

In closing, we are looking forward to the school year and in person learning. The district remains focused on learning and addressing educational challenges our students have faced due to COVID-19 disruptions. We continue to monitor the health situation in our schools and across our community and make any safety modifications necessary to ensure we can maintain a healthy environment for in-person learning.

This public comment period for the federal ESSER funding runs October 13, 2021 to November 13, 2021. The use of ESSER funds will combat the spread of Covid-19, as well as aid in learning recovery, improving air quality on district campuses, social emotional support for students and raising academic achievement for students.