

**BOARD OF EDUCATION OF HARFORD COUNTY
INFORMATIONAL REPORT
PRESENTATION ON
PROPOSED INCLEMENT WEATHER PLAN**

December 18, 2023

Background Information:

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) is opening a pathway for local education agencies (LEAs) to repurpose certain days as virtual school days in the 2023-2024 school year. To ensure meaningful and equitable virtual instruction during these days, pursuant to the Superintendent’s authority under Education Article §2-303, a process and attestations have been established to seek approval to repurpose certain days as virtual school days.

School systems will have the opportunity to use a total of eight (8) days as virtual school days for the described purposes. The days may be synchronous or asynchronous; however, no more than three (3) of the eight (8) days may be used as an asynchronous day.

A survey was sent to all Harford County Public Schools (HCPS) teachers and staff members, parents/guardians, and community members to inquire about their preference for the use of virtual instruction on inclement weather days. In order for a respondent to indicate they were completing the survey as a parent/guardian of a current HCPS student, they were required to provide authentication, such as student ID, before completing the survey (see Notes on page 2 for details).

An overwhelming majority of HCPS teachers and staff members and the majority of parents/guardians and community members responded in favor of using asynchronous virtual days in lieu of a traditional closing for snow days.

Survey Results for HCPS Teachers and Staff Members

There were **2,353** survey responses received from HCPS teachers and staff members as shown in the table below.

Role	Number of Respondents
Classroom Teacher	1,307
School-based Staff	762
School-based Administrators	71
Central Office Staff	167
Central Office Administrator/Supervisor	46
Total	2,353

A total of 1,753 staff members (**75 percent**) indicated their preference for HCPS to conduct **virtual instruction** while 600 staff members (25 percent) wanted HCPS to close all schools and offices in the case of an inclement weather event that prevents safe transportation to schools.

Of the 1,753 staff members who indicated their preference for virtual instruction, 1,432 staff members (**82 percent**) indicated they would like the virtual instruction to be **asynchronous only**. Of the remaining staff members who prefer virtual instruction, 268 staff members (15 percent) indicated they would like both asynchronous and synchronous; 35 staff members (2 percent) indicated they would like synchronous only; and 18 staff members (1 percent) selected ‘Other’ as their choice for virtual instruction. *See definitions of asynchronous and synchronous at the end of this report.*

Survey Results for Parents/Guardians

There were **4,149** responses received from parents/guardians of current HCPS students and from community members as shown in the table below.

Role	Number of Respondents
Parent/Guardian of a Current HCPS Student	4,048
Community Member	101
Total	4,149

A total of 2,242 parent/guardians and community members (**54 percent**) indicated their preference for HCPS to conduct **virtual instruction** while 1,907 (46 percent) wanted HCPS to close all schools and offices in the case of an inclement weather event that prevents safe transportation to schools.

Of the 2,242 parents/guardians and community members who indicated their preference for virtual instruction, 1,288 (**57.5 percent**) indicated they would like the virtual instruction to be **asynchronous only**. Of the remaining parents/guardians and community members who prefer virtual instruction, 694 (31 percent) indicated they would like both asynchronous and synchronous; 235 (10.5 percent) indicated they would like synchronous only; and 25 (1 percent) selected 'Other' as their choice for virtual instruction.

Notes:

- Of the 4,048 respondents who selected the 'Parent/Guardian of a Current HCPS Student' option in the survey, 3,926 (97 percent) provided valid and verifiable student IDs.
- The remaining 122 respondents (3 percent of all parent/guardian respondents) with invalid student IDs had the following preferences for virtual instruction:
 - 35 preferred asynchronous only.
 - 24 favored both asynchronous and synchronous.
 - 10 preferred synchronous only.
 - 53 selected 'Other.'
- It is important to note that the 122 responses with invalid student IDs did not significantly impact the overall results.

Analysis of Survey Open-ended Comments

Each survey respondent was asked the following open-ended prompt:

- **If you have additional comments, notes, or feedback, please utilize this space.**

There were 522 open-ended comments, notes, and/or feedback received from HCPS teachers and staff members, and 1,010 comments received from parents/guardians and community members. The HCPS Department of Research and Program Evaluation will review and analyze the comments received.

Before analyzing the open-ended responses, staff from the Department of Research and Program Evaluation will remove blank, irrelevant, or repeated entries during data cleaning. Inappropriate or identical answers submitted multiple times (e.g., based on survey start/completion time, Artificial Intelligence (AI)/chatbot-generated responses) will be eliminated and not included in the analysis. Staff from the Department of Research and Program Evaluation will also identify top key themes by extracting relevant content from cleaned responses.

Due to the time-intensive work required in analyzing the total of 1,532 uncleaned comments received from all survey respondents, the development of the themes emerging from the comments and the overall key findings from the comments will not be finalized until after December 13, 2023. Click [here](#)* to view a report on the analysis of the open-ended comments.

**Document will be updated to include the link when available.*

Discussion:

HCPS would like the Board's support to apply to use three (3) asynchronous days in the event of inclement weather during the 2023-2024 school year. If approved, this will allow asynchronous virtual instruction on three (3) of the six (6) designated inclement weather make-up days. This will result in the final possible day of instruction (with three (3) "traditional" inclement weather days) being Monday, June 10, 2024. Currently, with six (6) "traditional" inclement weather days built into the calendar, the final instructional day is scheduled for Thursday, June 13, 2024.

With the Board's approval, HCPS will submit the 2023-2024 School Year Virtual Day Instruction Plan.

Superintendent's Recommendation:

The Superintendent recommends that the Board of Education accept this informational report. Following discussion of the presentation and public input, the Board will be asked to vote on this topic at the next scheduled Board meeting.

Definitions

Asynchronous Learning:

Instructional content is designed so a student will engage in the materials on their own without live, direct instruction from the teacher.

Synchronous Learning:

Students will virtually attend class sessions at the same time as their teachers and classmates.