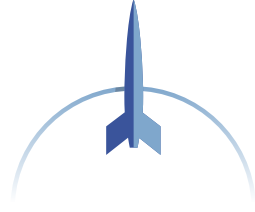


# Launching Thriving Futures

RECOVERY, ACCELERATION, AND RE-ENGAGEMENT



The PWCS plan for acceleration, recovery, and re-engagement through providing comprehensive academic, social-emotional, and mental health supports in schools



# Investing in our Future

This plan was developed to address Unfinished Learning in PWCS. It highlights the efforts made to measure the impacts of COVID-19, school closures, and sustained virtual instruction on our students, with particular emphasis on our most vulnerable learners.

Best practices, derived from current educational research will be contextualized for use in our community to meet the individual needs of students by equitably distributing additional federal resources to support acceleration in student learning as we recover, reconnect, and re-engage with in-person learning.



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## EFFECTS OF COVID-19 ON STUDENT LEARNING

When the COVID-19 pandemic caused Prince William County Public Schools (PWCS) and other school divisions to close last spring, the Division quickly developed a plan to provide students with the opportunity to continue to work with their teachers to review standards that had already been taught. The Division gathered a taskforce that included representation from multiple voices in the field, including educators and school leaders from diverse schools, as well as counselors, classified personnel, and central office staff. Additionally, parent groups were gathered, as part of our commitment to seek feedback on the ongoing efforts and plans recommended by the School Division. As a result, students at all grade levels were able to work to improve their grades while receiving ongoing virtual instruction and support on standards previously taught. A virtual summer school plan was offered the same year to support students at all grade levels. Return to New Learning Plans for the 2020-21 school year were developed through the input of stakeholders, such as the Division's Instructional Task Force and Parent Focus Group members.

School and new learning resumed in the fall of 2020. English Learners (ELs) and students with disabilities (Sped) were provided with the opportunity to receive in-person instruction four days per week. All other students started the year virtually. PWCS, like many other school divisions, provided every student with a digital device and access to Wi-Fi. Curriculum resources and modules were provided by the Office of Student and Professional Learning. This work encompassed the creation of almost 700 courses and over 7,000 units of study providing PWCS' newly adopted Learning Management System, Canvas. Furthermore, to address Unfinished Learning from spring 2020, course pacing and curriculum units were modified and enhanced to better support learning in a virtual environment. Hours were dedicated to training teachers, leaders, students, and families on the use of Canvas, a tool that became the primary platform for curriculum communication and delivery. Finally, the Division began the implementation of Mastery Connect as a common assessment platform. This tool interfaces with Canvas, and enables teachers to share assessments, allowing the Division to have a consistent window into instruction and learning outcomes.

One of the priorities to support the Return to New Learning Plan during the 2020-21 school year was to provide employees with comprehensive professional learning in a variety of modalities. Instructional coaches created a Canvas course to provide teachers with resources to enhance teaching and learning in a concurrent classroom. Professional learning sessions were delivered with a focus on supporting teachers who transitioned to a concurrent teaching environment, with just-in-time resources, including videos, sessions with technology experts from the field, and targeted coaching. As part of our commitment to engage and support families, multiple opportunities to attend Digital Parent Boot Camp sessions were offered at various times throughout the day. These sessions focused on the available technology tools for students, and were hosted by the Office of Professional Learning. The Office of English Learner Programs and Services provided interpretation services and translated written information.

In response to many of the challenges generated as a result of the pandemic, in March 2020 the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) requested a federal waiver for students slated to take the Virginia Standards of Learning tests as well as English language development assessments for ELs. Despite the waiver, ACCESS



administration of ELs was completed in PWCS, and is part of the data considered in this report. Services and support for ELs remained the same as during the initial school closures. Following health guidance, the Division implemented plans to bring additional students back in person using a four-day-per-week, 50% model, prioritizing the attendance of students identified as vulnerable learners. Teachers and leaders prioritized time for the development of positive relationships with students and families. Additionally, Division office departments such as the Offices of English Learner Programs and Services, Student Learning, Professional Learning, Student Management and Alternative Programs, Special Education, and Student Services utilized a variety of platforms to engage families, providing them with resources, just-in-time training, and ultimately empowering them to support their students academically, socially, and emotionally during the pandemic. As the year progressed and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidance changed, teachers provided simultaneous instruction (to support in-person and virtual students), which posed teaching and learning challenges for both teachers and students.

Despite multiple attempts on the part of educators to provide continuity of learning through remote learning, these efforts fell short for many ELs and their families. As we looked at the most significant barriers ELs in PWCS have experienced, parents and caregivers' limited capacity to support student learning due to school-family language barriers rose to the top. A lack of digital literacy and experience with digital devices and familiarity with learning management systems presented challenges as many families attempted to support their students at home.

PWCS identified the development of academic and social language as primary areas of concern for ELs as they faced many setbacks in language development due to limited opportunities for listening, speaking, and writing in English. In response, the Division put in place a local process to welcome vulnerable learners as schools reopened in person in the fall of 2020. Additionally, PWCS provided training to over 10,400 educators, focused on different learning models to support ELs, their social emotional learning, virtual and hybrid co-teaching strategies, and culturally responsive practices for multilingual learners.

Based on available qualitative and quantitative data, the Division developed a plan to address Unfinished Learning utilizing the latest identified research-based strategies such as high-quality, High-Dosage Tutoring (Kraft & Goldstein, 2020), extended learning time, accelerated learning, layered curriculum, and updated unit guides, which include pre-requisite knowledge and skills.

**PWCS has identified core values that will guide our plan:**

- Best instructional practices that will result in academic achievement for all students;
- Integrity of services, learning process, targeted support, and monitoring of the effectiveness of the plan; and
- Equity in the distribution of funding, supports, and human resources provided to schools.

To most effectively address Unfinished Learning, the Division recommended that the primary and best instructional model for the 2021-22 school year is five days per week of in-person instruction. The Division is also offering a virtual-only model and continues to offer nontraditional programs to meet individual student needs.



## **Global and National Trends**

While the COVID-19 school closures were unprecedented in the United States, there are multiple bodies of research on which PWCS has drawn to anticipate the impacts of extended closures on student learning. While educators and others are still determining all the K-12 and postsecondary educational impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic, multiple national and international studies have demonstrated significant negative impacts on student learning and achievement as well as the social and emotional well-being of students. One recent study by McKinsey and Company (2021) found that students have on average five to nine months of Unfinished Learning that must be addressed. National and state data show that ELs, SPED, and economically disadvantaged students have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic and closure of schools. However, we understand there are gaps in the data that remain unclear as to how effective remote learning was, given that most K–12 students and teachers had little experience with online instruction and that large gaps in technology access exist in many parts of the country. At the same time, while many aspects of the pandemic make estimating its impact on achievement difficult, there are parallels between the current situation and other planned and unplanned reasons why students miss school that can help us quantify the potential scale of the COVID-19 impact. Specifically, existing research on the effects that (a) summer vacation, (b) weather-related school closures (i.e., Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans), and (c) out-of-school time due to absenteeism, have on learning can provide a rough sense of how additional time out of school due to COVID-19 might affect student achievement (Hill & Loeb, 2020).

Information on national trends related to mathematics explains how students are predicted to show even smaller learning gains from the previous year, returning with less than 50% of typical gains. When the pandemic subsides, students will return to school with lower achievement that must be addressed. There are also concerns that the gap between high- and low-achieving students will become larger (Soland, 2020). Taking these concerns into account, PWCS has examined available formal and informal district data to inform our efforts and needed supports for students. Tools such as MasteryConnect, Lexia PowerUp, and Core5, as well as administrative data from online learning platforms, will equip teachers and support staff with information that can help identify students who have disengaged from instruction and/or who are at risk of dropping out entirely (Hill & Loeb, 2020).

Researchers, district leaders, and policy makers are offering research-based programs and policy recommendations designed to make up academic ground lost from COVID-19 school closures (i.e., Allensworth & Schwartz, 2020; Hill & Loeb, 2020). As such, the United States Department of Education Office of Civil Rights recently published a report entitled “Education in a Pandemic: The Disparate Impacts of COVID-19 on America’s Students.” The report articulates 11 overarching observations based on the data collected and studies reviewed. Some of the report’s observations regarding disparate effects on students include the following:



- Emerging evidence shows that the pandemic has negatively affected academic growth, widening pre-existing disparities. In core subjects like math and reading, there are worrisome signs that in some grades, students might be falling even further behind pre-pandemic expectations.
- COVID-19 appears to have deepened the impact of disparities in access and opportunity facing many students of color in public schools, including technological and other barriers that make it harder to stay engaged in virtual classrooms.
- Even before the pandemic, many students learning English struggled to participate on equal terms in the classroom as they confronted the dual challenge of mastering grade-level content while continuing to learn English. For many ELs, the abrupt shift to learning from home amid the challenges of the pandemic has made that struggle even harder.
- For many elementary and secondary school students with disabilities, COVID-19 has significantly disrupted the education and related aids and services needed to support their academic progress and prevent regression. Additionally there are signs that those disruptions may be exacerbating long-standing disability-based disparities in academic achievement.

Nearly all students have experienced some challenges to their mental health and well-being during the pandemic and many have lost access to school-based services and support. America's Promise Alliance conducted a survey during the pandemic finding that more than one in four young people reported lost sleep because of unhappiness, depression, and loss of confidence in self. Survey participants stated feeling less connected to their teachers and other school staff during online learning. This information supports the CDC findings in the increase in the proportion of emergency department visits for mental health reasons. Compared with 2019, this data presents how the proportion of mental health-related visits for children aged 5-11 and 12-17 years increased approximately 24% and 31%, respectively. Finally, observations from state and national trend data for out-of-school time may understate the impact of COVID-19 on student learning, especially when compared with summer break, due to the economic and social impacts of the virus.





### **Unfinished Learning defined**

As a result of the social and emotional impacts caused by COVID-19 and school closures; PWCS refers to Unfinished Learning as the pre-requisite skills and knowledge that students need to be successful with academic learning but have not yet acquired.

## **Academic supports and extended learning opportunities during the 2020-21 school year**

- **Graduation Academy** - The Office of Student Management and Alternative Programs (OSMAP) provided a graduation academy to support the School Division's efforts for on-time graduation for our high school students.
- **S.T.A.R. Program (S.T.A.R)** - The Student Tutoring and Remediation Program was created by OSMAP, as an early intervention, to assist students with staying on pace academically in English and mathematics. The S.T.A.R. program offered four evening virtual sessions, with certified teachers, where students (grades 8-12) received support to master current standards. During the winter break, the S.T.A.R program offered week-long bootcamps in English and mathematics as part of our efforts to close learning gaps.
- **Summer School K-8** - In addition to remedial supports in language arts and mathematics, OSMAP in collaboration with Prince William County's Department of Parks and Recreation and Office of Tourism, integrated place-based learning opportunities to support the Division's efforts of improvement in the areas of science and history. Additionally, social and emotional learning activities were embedded in the summer school day to address the pandemic related social and emotional impact.
- **English Learners' Academy** - The Office of English Learner Programs and Services hosted an EL summer academy, providing high school students with opportunities to access credit recovery classes such as: English 9 and 10, Algebra I, Geometry, and Algebra Functions and Discrete Applications (AFDA).
- **Lexia PowerUp and Core5** - As part of the Division's efforts to support students' literacy development, PWCS provided every K-12 student with a Lexia account, supporting core areas needed for reading comprehension, reading fluency, oral language, word study, writing, and grammar.
- **Parent Engagement Events for Families of Vulnerable Populations** - The Office of English Learner Programs and Services, in collaboration with Title I and Special Education Offices, offered monthly virtual events to support parents and their students during the school year. Sessions were focused on addressing topics such as Canvas parent pointers, social emotional support, literacy, math, health and wellness, specialty programs, and return to school plans. They took place with the support of interpreters and translators who provided access to families of multilingual learners. Additionally, the Office of Student Services launched the "Parent Learning Series," to meet the needs of parents. Sessions were offered to all PWCS families and topics ranged from social-emotional support to post-secondary planning.

## Division findings

PWCS has identified priority academic areas based on key findings in the following areas:

- **Mathematics;**
- **Early literacy;**
- **English language arts;**
- **Science;**
- **Academic, social, and communication development for students with disabilities;**
- **Academic and social language development for English Learners;**
- **Academic achievement and grades in all subject areas; and**
- **Social, emotional, and mental health.**

## Mathematics

Centrally available common assessment data for mathematics at all levels is limited, especially at the middle and high school levels. Title I schools have utilized Assessing Math Concepts (AMC) data to monitor instruction, however, during the pandemic those efforts were negatively impacted. Diagnostic data available from the Virginia Kindergarten Readiness Program (VKRP) does not provide any longitudinal data as that assessment has only recently been introduced. Preliminary Standards of Learning (SOL) test results indicate significant opportunities for improvement in mathematics at the elementary, middle, and high school levels. Qualitative data analysis drawn from anecdotal evidence provided by Division lead teachers and department chairs point to teacher struggles with maintaining an instructional pace to allow for the breadth of topics and units to be fully developed with their students. The virtual school day schedule impacted the amount of instructional time available for exposing students to the math curriculum and is a suspected contributor to declines in student achievement. Available elementary common unit assessment data indicates the following areas of priority for students in grades 3, 4, and 5.

- Number sense, measurement, and probability and statistics are the greatest areas of need for the greatest number of students.
- Computation and estimation, geometry, patterns, functions, and algebra are also topics requiring additional support for most students.

## Early Literacy-Virginia Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening

The pandemic has impacted our youngest learners in significant ways. Access to all students to conduct assessments has presented a challenge. As such, we do not have the necessary data to identify areas of need using well-established assessment instruments.

- **Kindergarten** - Results from Virginia's Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS) indicate 20% fewer kindergarten students met the overall benchmark in the spring of 2021 than in spring of 2019, with letter sounds and spelling showing the greatest need for improvement. This is a strong indicator that students entering first grade will require more support with phonics instruction.



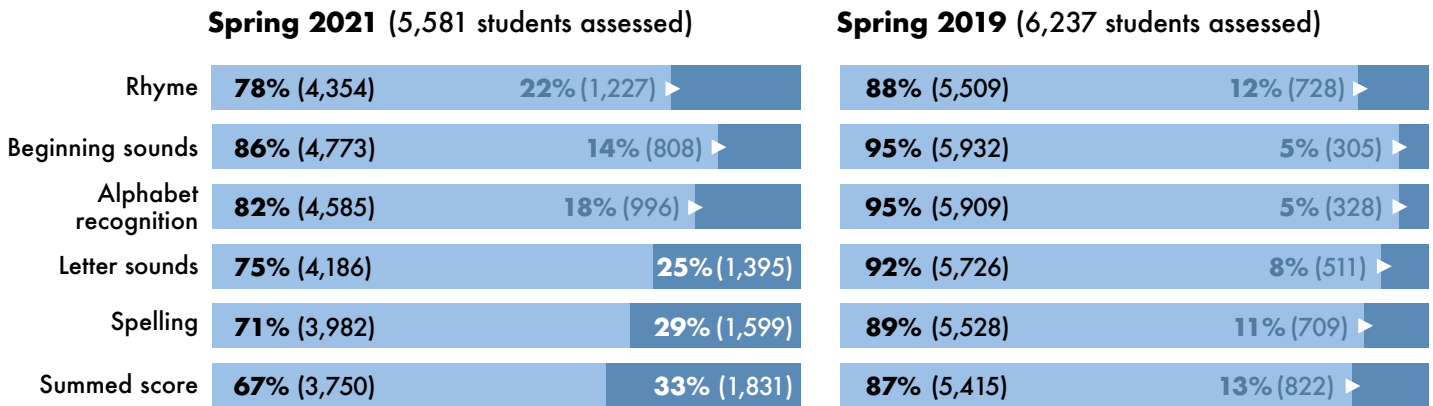
- **First Grade** - Similar to the findings from kindergarten, last year's first graders showed a much stronger likelihood of not meeting benchmarks, compared to their peers' performance in 2019, with 41% below the benchmark in 2021. This compares to only 19% in 2019. Both spelling and word recognition in isolation saw 20-point declines between 2019 and 2021. Oral reading in context fared only slightly better with a 17-point decline over that same period. In context, oral reading is the area of greatest concern overall and is more pronounced as an area of need among students in Title I schools as their performance was 10 percentage points lower than their more affluent peers. For this year's second graders, support with early reading skills, especially phonemic awareness and phonics, will be essential, as will the need for extensive time to apply skills in reading and writing of text.
- **Second Grade** - Finally, last year's literacy achievement picture for second graders appeared to be more complex. Students who scored high benchmark on their grade one PALS assessment were excluded from the administration of the spring PALS test as second graders. However, among those tested, spelling and word recognition in isolation were areas of concern with only 58% of those tested meeting the spelling benchmark and 62% meeting the oral reading in context benchmark.

## 2021 PWCS Division PALS data at-a-glance

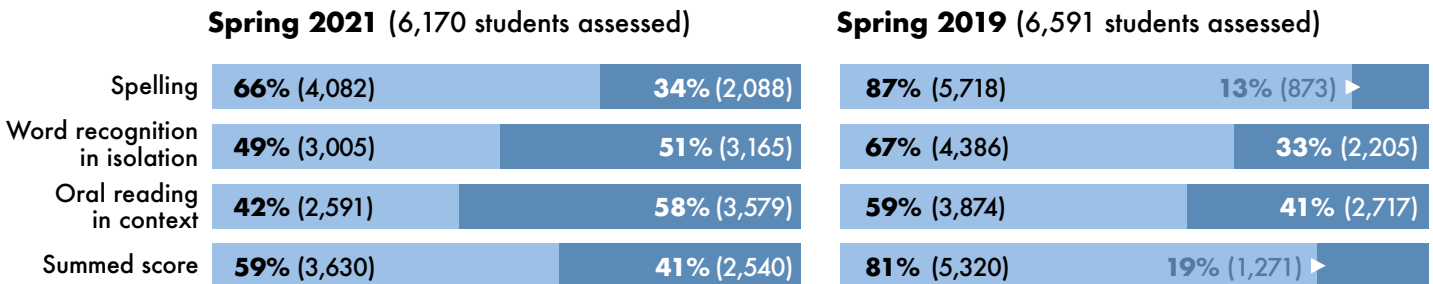
The percentage and number of students who met or failed to meet benchmarks in the following criteria:

● Met benchmark ● Did not meet benchmark

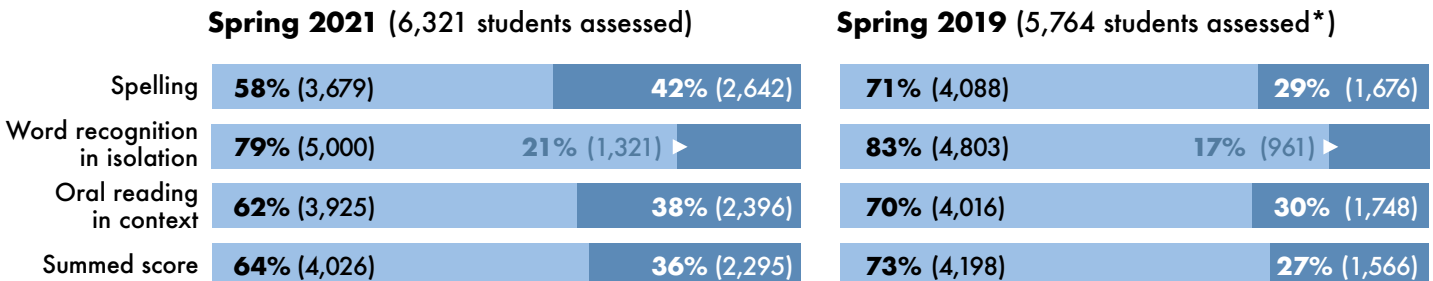
### KINDERGARTEN



### FIRST GRADE



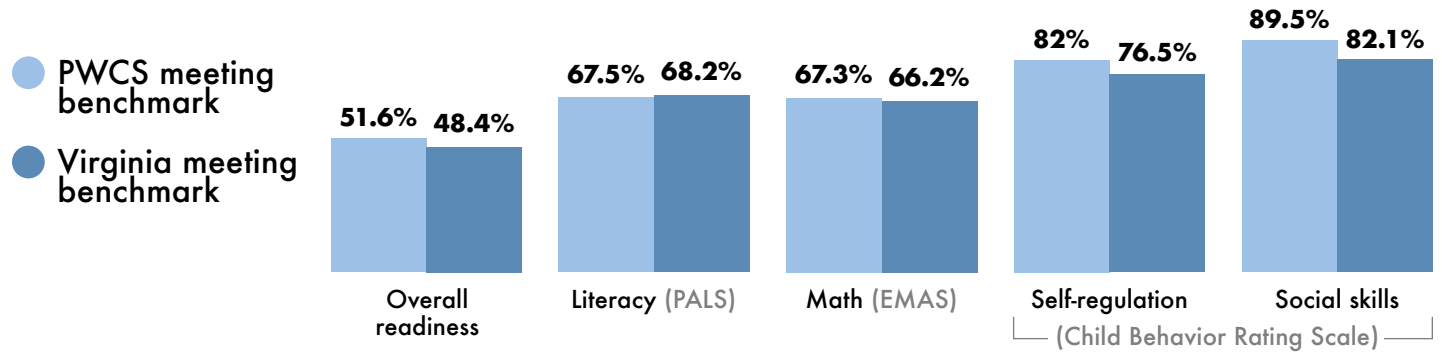
### SECOND GRADE



\*Does not include high benchmark

## Early Literacy - Virginia Kindergarten Readiness Program (VKRP)

Kindergarten results from the VKRP confirmed that the challenges faced by students in PWCS are consistent with those encountered by students throughout the Commonwealth.



## SOL pass rates by subject and test – PWCS and Virginia

An analysis of the data for both PWCS and Virginia for 2018-19 and 2020-21 shows performance decreased for both PWCS and Virginia for the vast majority of assessments. Results revealed the following:

- Elementary and middle school** - Students participating in the grade 3-8 SOL assessments in PWCS (and most divisions across Virginia) did not have the opportunity to participate in retakes this year, due to the pandemic. In previous years, students who scored within a certain range were afforded the opportunity to retake the state assessment. Expedited retakes will resume in 2022.
- Middle school mathematics** - Many divisions across the state handle the acceleration of students in mathematics differently. As such, students who are advanced in mathematics end up not being required to participate in the administration of certain SOL assessments. In PWCS, both grades six and seven qualify under this exemption. PWCS shows that students exceed state performance in mathematics in elementary school, and then again in eighth-grade mathematics.
- High school** - High school results used for this report include retakes, as students' state assessment participation is connected to graduation requirements. Graduation requirements for most of our high school students only require participation of verified credit. Once they obtain a passing score in math, science, and history, they do not have to participate in another assessment. As a result, far fewer students took assessments like Algebra II, Virginia and US History, World History II, and chemistry in 2020-21 than in 2018-19.
- History and Writing** - PWCS administered performance assessments in history and social science for elementary (Virginia studies) and middle school (Civics and Economics) students, as well as for eighth-grade Writing in 2020-21. SOL testing will resume in these areas during the 2021-22 school year.

## Virginia Remote Student Progress Test Results by Subject and Student Group – PWCS and Virginia

This report has considered performance by subject for each student group for both PWCS and Virginia on the Virginia Remote Student Progress Tests. PWCS students participating in these assessments outperformed state averages in all subject areas. In terms of student group performance, all student groups in PWCS outperformed state averages except for Asian students (below state averages in all subjects) as well as English Learners (exceeded state performance in all subjects except for remote science).

### Course/grade level marks (grades)

During the 2020-21 school year, at the middle school level, 15% of students experienced failure in two or more courses. English Learners experienced failure in two or more courses at a rate (28%) nearly three times as high as non-English Learners (10%). Among students with disabilities, 24% experienced failure in two or more courses, compared to 14% of students without disabilities. Relatively higher proportions of Hispanic students (26%) and Black students (15%) experienced failure in two or more courses as compared to White students (6%) and Asian students (8%).

At the high school level, 13% of students experienced failure in two or more courses. English Learners experienced failure in two or more courses at a rate (31%) over three times as high as non-English Learners (10%). The gap between students with disabilities (17%) and students without disabilities (13%) experiencing failure in two or more courses was smaller at high school. Relatively higher proportions of Hispanic students (26%) and Black students (13%) experienced failure in two or more courses as compared to White students (6%) and Asian students (7%).

### English Learner performance

**Lexia Core5 and PowerUp** - Lexia provides explicit, systematic, personalized accelerated learning in the six areas of reading instruction, targeting skill gaps as they emerge, and providing teachers with the data and student-specific resources they need for individual or small-group instruction. As part of PWCS' efforts to support ELs, the Office of English Learner Programs and Services provided every student with an account to monitor ELs' language development in alignment to their WIDA English language proficiency status. Expectations for students, teachers, and parents were communicated including how their engagement and efficacy would support the monitoring of student growth. PWCS identified several guiding research questions for the year, evaluating the program, and its implementation and impact on the progress of students with an EL status. Results from the data offered school and Division leadership with valuable information on student growth by language proficiency and literacy levels. PWCS has identified that most students with a language proficiency level between 1-3 were engaged with items related to academic vocabulary. At the secondary level, students who accessed the tool consistently engaged with items related to the comprehension of text at their reading level. Overall, students in the primary grades (K-2) with developing language proficiency levels (1-3) experienced the most significant gains based on the statistical data represented on the following page.

## Core5 usage and progress by EL students in PWCS

### Progress in Core5 during 2020-21: Meeting Usage for ELs

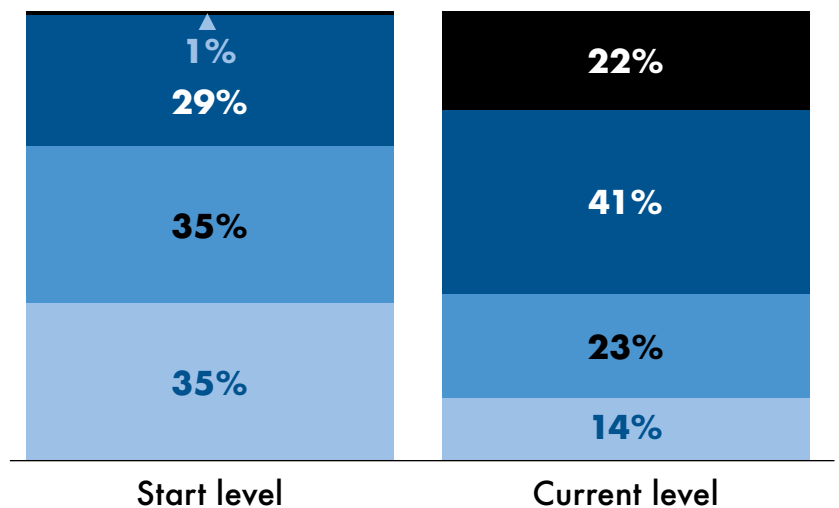
Students who use Core5 as recommended, consistently meet their individualized usage targets. In order to be classified as “Meeting Usage” in Core5 at this time of year, students must have used the online components of Core5 for at least seven weeks and met their weekly usage targets for at least 50% of the weeks they used the program. **Out of the Meeting Usage students, 1,711 students (71%) have advanced at least one grade level of material.** The graph below compares the change in the percentage of 2,411 Meeting Usage students working below, in, and above grade level from the start of the year (start level) to now (current level).

### Core5 grade level of skills

- Reached end-of-year benchmark
- In student grade
- 1 grade below
- 2+ grades below

### Highlight

The percent of Meeting Usage EL students working in grade level or having already reached the end-of-year benchmark increased by 33% from 30% at the start to 63% currently.



**Grade Retention Practices** - Retaining students in their current grade level from one year to the next is a controversial practice with research indicating that retention often produces undesirable long-term academic and social/emotional outcomes. PWCS overall retention rate for students in elementary and middle school grades decreased compared to the previous year. Data for high school students revealed that a significant number of ELs did not earn a passing score in courses, requiring them to repeat the grade this upcoming year. Some of these students are participating in the summer school programs available as part of the remediation efforts in place by the Division.

## Attendance and engagement

During the 2018-19 school year, a total of 9,378 students in Prince William County Public Schools, just under 10% of the total population, were chronically absent (defined as missing 10% or more school days). In 2019-20, that figure increased to 12,726 students, or approximately 13% of the student population defined as chronically absent. It is important to note that there were only 120 days included in 2019-20, meaning that the threshold to reach 10% of days absent was lower (12 days instead of 18). At the end of the 2020-21 school year, those figures had fallen to merely 4,066 students defined as chronically absent, or 4% of the total student population.

## College entrance exam

The Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) is the most common college entrance exam PWCS students choose to take. Participation in the tests from 2018-21 decreased significantly in the number of students participating, falling from 3,655 in 2018-19 to 2,711 test-takers in 2020-21. In 2018-19, PWCS graduates had an overall average best score of 1,122 on the SAT. Slight decreases during the 2019-20 and 2020-21 school years place the current overall average best score at 1,108.

## Three-year Division SAT average best score

● 2018-19 ● 2019-20 ● 2020-21

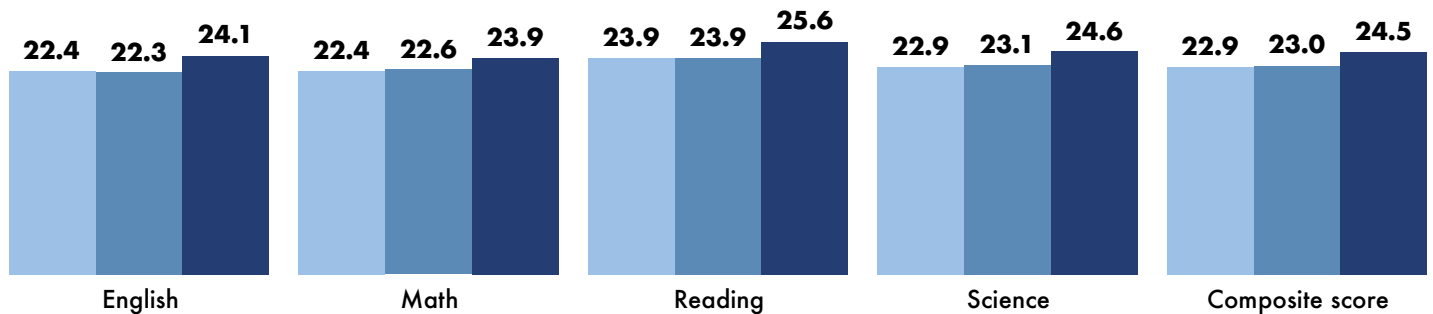
Math	Read/Write	Score total
553	569	1,122
547	567	1,114
544	564	1,108

Note: Scores represent average best scores for actual PWCS graduating seniors. Numbers could vary slightly from official College Board reports.

Far fewer PWCS students take the American College Testing (ACT) compared with the SAT. In 2018-19, 863 students took the ACT. The number slightly decreased the following year. However in 2020-21, participation fell to 294 students. Performance during the same period increased from an average best score of 22.4 to 24.1.

## Three-year Division ACT average best score

● 2018-19 ● 2019-20 ● 2020-21



## Economic Impacts

Upon the closure of schools on Friday, March 13, 2020, the Office of School Food and Nutrition Services quickly developed a plan to meet community needs as a result of the pandemic. A new service model was designed, making breakfast and lunch meals available for all families. Contactless pickup stations outside of 17 schools served nearly 10,000 meals on the first day, showing the Division's commitment to our families during such an unprecedented time.

A process for selecting schools as meal site locations was developed; focusing on criteria that looked at several data points, giving the highest range to free/reduced lunch participation rates, sites that traditionally operate during school closures (summer/spring/winter breaks), and their geographical coverage. While this was a newly developed model, the team closely monitored data trends and the feedback gathered from the community





daily, making recommendations to meet the overwhelming need. Within the first week of operation, two additional school meal sites were added, followed by an additional three sites a week later. A total of 22 school meal sites offered free breakfast and lunch daily to PWCS families students. As a result of the efforts and commitment of the Office of Food and Nutrition Services, PWCS served one million meals.

With the start of the school year, came 72 new U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) waivers and flexibility. PWCS has leveraged as many resources as possible to provide the greatest benefit to our community. Prior to the waivers, only sites with a student enrollment of less than 50% Free/Reduced were able to participate in the feeding program and only one day of food could be offered per school day. Combining multiple waivers, the Office of School Food and Nutrition Services created a “Grocery Kit” concept, offering 28 meal equivalents per student (seven days of breakfast/lunch/snack/supper) in bulk, made available curbside with contactless service twice a week. The model was successful as it served nearly 400,000 meal equivalents in the first week alone. In response to our community’s feedback, PWCS adjusted the model slightly and increased the days. 500,000 meals a week were served, totaling over 21 million meal equivalents served during the 2020-21 school year.

With the advent of the new waivers, specifically the Universal Free Meals component, the administration of the Free/Reduced lunch program was effectively halted. PWCS’ three-year pre-COVID Free/Reduced percentage was 42% with a half percent increase year over year. In order to be approved for Free/Reduced price meals, families became eligible by pre-qualifying based on their participation in other Federal Entitlement Programs [such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), or by individual application.] Since all meals were free, there was no additional incentive to apply for benefits. This resulted in the percentage of Free/Reduced applications dropping to 35.04%. Previously the Division processed 17,000 applications per year, representing 18% of the Free/Reduced approval. However, in 2020 only 11,000 applications were processed, representing 12% of total approvals. With Universal Free Meals slated to continue for the 2021-22 school year, we expect a compounding impact with fewer applications still being submitted for processing. Further, a new Virginia law requires all eligible schools to participate in the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) where entire schools are qualified as free.

With Universal Free Meals extended to the new school year, we are anticipating 75% of the daily in-person population to choose to dine. In preparation we have developed operational efficiencies to support smooth transitions to limit educational interruption. Additionally, we have designed a model to service the 3% of students learning virtually. Enrolled virtual students will have access to “Bulk Kits” (five breakfast portions/five lunch portions) that will be made available for pre-order once a week at any of our 13 high schools with special arrangements available for families experiencing hardship.



## CONCLUSION

In summary, these findings indicate the pandemic has had significant negative impacts on student academic achievement, engagement, and mental well-being. These significant negative impacts include increased learning and opportunity gaps among student groups with more disparate impacts for minorities, economically disadvantaged, ELs, and students with disabilities. In response, PWCS has the moral imperative to take immediate action to address Unfinished Learning and the other related impacts that could become potential barriers to academic and post-secondary success for all students.

### **Continuous improvement and Division leadership**

As school districts around the nation combine efforts to welcome students in the fall, educators and school leaders must be intentional about providing students with a safe place and the support of trusted adults. Students and families will need access to additional resources and support as part of the recovery process. Timely research and best practices for a diverse range of learners has been considered in the development of this Unfinished Learning plan. In doing so, PWCS remains committed to providing students with a safe place and the support of trusted adults in order to learn and grow during the school day.

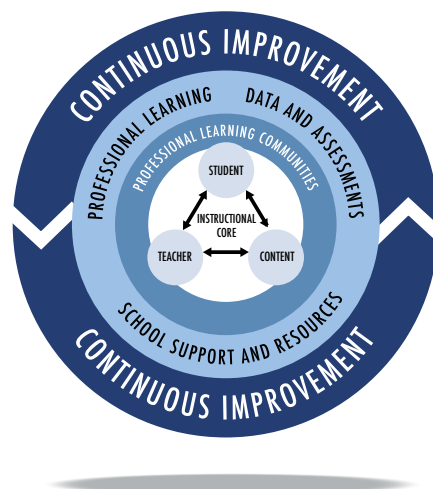
PWCS' priority is to guarantee students return to a safe learning environment where they have access to emotional support, quality instruction, and resources. From surveys to baseline data, PWCS recognizes the importance of considering multiple data points for determining each student's needs.

PWCS serves vulnerable populations in need of different systems of support. As such, we recommend tailoring these services to be delivered by highly-qualified staff and/or staff receiving specialized training, helping to accelerate learning, remove social and emotional barriers, and close any potential learning gaps. This includes providing students and parents with ongoing and timely feedback about their progress and different ways they can access additional support in and outside the school day. Because we understand the importance and role of professional learning and emotional wellness in building teachers' capacity, we have provided a series of opportunities that will continue throughout the fall, supporting educators with curriculum resources, best practices for vulnerable learners, and assessment tools to measure student growth. In addition, we will ensure opportunities are available to focus on teacher self-care and wellness.

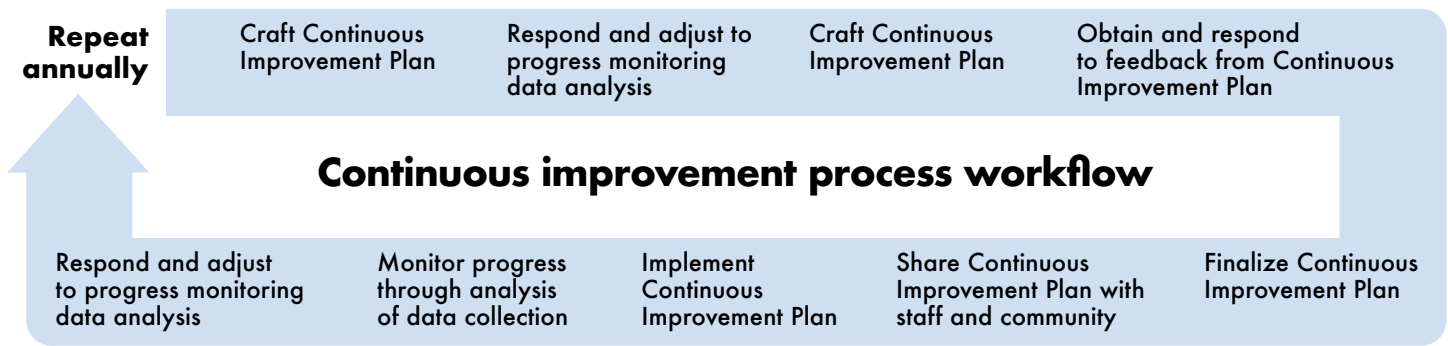
## Guiding principles and considerations

Continuous improvement is a disciplined and ongoing approach to improving processes and systems that produce positive outcomes for students (Myong et, al. 2020). The principles and considerations are as follows:

- Acceleration of learning is necessary for all students to address Unfinished Learning;
- Access to rigorous high-quality grade level content learning for all students;
- Prioritization of instruction and learning on grade level content to address Unfinished Learning;
- Focus on integrity of the Instructional Core, priority prerequisite knowledge, and skills along with enduring understandings or “power standards”;
- Maintain integrity and fidelity of inclusive practices for vulnerable students;
- Identification of learning gaps, minimizing the use of standardized testing;
- Utilization of continuous improvement best practices;
- Re-engagement of families with opportunities to obtain the knowledge and skills to actively support their learner(s), authentic partnerships with schools, and consistent advocacy;
- Build and sustain positive trusting relationships with students and families; and
- Recognize, identify, and remove existing social/emotional barriers that may impede the completion of Unfinished Learning.



**Source:** City, E.A., Elmore, R.F., Fiarman, S.E., Teitel, L. & Lachman, A. (2018). *Instructional Rounds in education: a network approach to improving teaching and learning*. Harvard Education Press.



## Considerations for the Division

- What are the key qualitative and quantitative assessment data points that will be utilized to determine the most important areas of Unfinished Learning at this time?
- What universal screeners and baseline assessments will schools be required to utilize in the fall to confirm areas of Unfinished Learning and effectively plan for accelerated learning?
- Based on identified assessment data, what areas of Unfinished Learning should be prioritized for each subject area?
- What research-based strategies should be utilized to address the areas of Unfinished Learning?
- What diagnostic, formative, and benchmark assessments will be utilized to monitor student progress and adjust instruction?
- What materials and programmatic resources are needed to effectively address the identified areas of Unfinished Learning?
- What universal professional learning is needed to ensure teachers and leaders have the knowledge and skills to accelerate learning and effectively address Unfinished Learning for all students?
- What specialized professional learning is needed to ensure teachers and leaders have the knowledge and skills to address Unfinished Learning for students in need of specialized instruction?

## Considerations for schools

- What common universal screeners, benchmark assessments, and/or baseline assessment data points will teacher collaborative teams analyze to determine priority areas of Unfinished Learning?
- How will school leaders provide teachers with coaching, observation feedback, and expectations for student learning?
- What are the areas of Unfinished Learning that students must demonstrate to successfully learn the grade-level content?
- What areas of Unfinished Learning appear to be the most significant for individual students as well as vulnerable groups of students?
- Are there common trends/consistencies identified across assessment data points?
- What areas of learning have students mastered?
- What are the areas of strength for individual students and vulnerable groups of students?
- How can those strengths be built upon as learning is accelerated?
- How will human and material resources be consistently utilized to accelerate the learning of all students?
- How will school leaders create opportunities for student learning to support teachers in their collaboration, learning, and planning around the Unfinished Learning Plan?

## PWCS Key Commitments

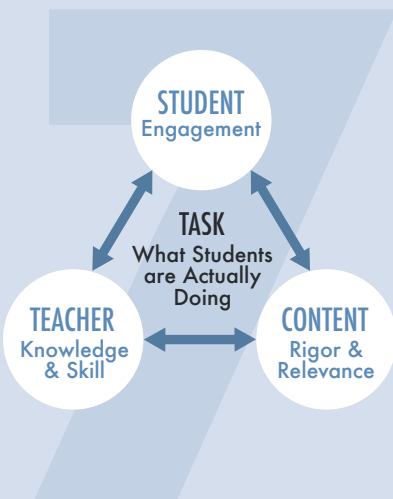
### 1 Focus on the Instructional Core

PWCS is committed to increasing the capacity of educator knowledge and skills needed to support students, increasing educator engagement in their own learning. By focusing on the Instructional Core, students in PWCS will have access and be exposed to challenging content. The Instructional Core must be at the center of monitoring and feedback for continuous improvement in teaching and learning. Observations and monitoring of the Instructional Core bring meaning to the quantitative academic data and must focus on the collection of evidence for the following:

- What are teachers doing and saying?
- What are students doing and saying?
- What task have students been given and is it aligned to the appropriate level of rigor for the grade level and/or course content standard?
- How are school leaders providing planning and professional learning opportunities for individual teachers, co-teachers, and collaborative learning teams at schools?

All initiatives, systems, and decision making will consider the impacts on the Instructional Core including:

- How does this initiative/system/decision impact the Instructional Core?
- What are students being asked to do to demonstrate mastery?



The diagram illustrates the Instructional Core as a triangle of interconnected components. At the top is 'STUDENT Engagement'. At the bottom left is 'TEACHER Knowledge & Skill'. At the bottom right is 'CONTENT Rigor & Relevance'. In the center is 'TASK What Students are Actually Doing'. Double-headed arrows connect each of the three outer components to the central task, indicating that all three are essential and interdependent for effective instruction.

### Seven principles of the Instructional Core

1. Increases in student learning occur only because of improvements in the level of content, teacher’s knowledge and skill, and student engagement.
2. If any single element of the Instructional Core is changed, the remaining components must change as well.
3. If the core is not visible, it is not present.
4. Task predicts performance.
5. The real accountability system lays in the tasks that students are asked to do.
6. We learn the work by executing the work, not by instructing others to do the work, nor by having done the work previously, or relying on hiring experts who can act as proxies for our knowledge about how to execute the work.
7. Description before analysis, analysis before prediction, prediction before evaluation.



Three ways to improve student growth and learning Division-wide is to utilize the implementation and fidelity of the Instructional Core as anchor research for continuous improvement.

1. Increase the teacher’s instructional knowledge and skill (capacity).
2. Increase the level of complexity of the content students must learn.
3. Change the role of the student in the instructional process.

To address Unfinished Learning and accelerate student progress, we must positively influence all aspects of the Instructional Core. To accomplish professional learning we must include development, modeling, and coaching relative to the following:

**Curriculum/Content Standards** – When teachers develop instructional knowledge, skill, and capacity, it impacts the level of work in classrooms and/or increases student engagement. If a teacher doesn’t know, and/or fails to align the standards/content, or students don’t find the task meaningful and engaging, it will not increase learning.

**Professional Learning** – It must influence teacher thinking and change/enhance behavior in the classroom.

**Instructional Leadership, Coaching, and Mentoring** – It provides teachers the opportunity to develop /increase instructional skills, capacity, and impact on learning in classrooms and increases student engagement. There must be observable changes in teacher practice.

**Leadership Development, Coaching, and Mentoring** – Second to teachers, leaders have the greatest influence on student achievement in the classroom. Developing a principal pipeline includes the development of building and sustaining culture, instruction, and organization.

- Funding Commitments:**
- ▶ English language arts (ELA) textbooks and core materials provided to all schools;
  - ▶ Hands-on science experiments, resources, and materials provided to all schools to support inquiry-based science instruction;
  - ▶ Professional learning to implement Instructional Rounds across all schools;
  - ▶ One teaching assistant for every 500 students for focus and priority schools; and
  - ▶ One math specialist to support staff, per school for schools identified as prioritized.

## 2 Equitable access to rigorous, high-quality, culturally relevant curriculum

PWCS is committed to providing educators with high-quality curriculum frameworks, resources, and planning opportunities centered on best practices and collaboration. This commitment provides every student with access to rigorous curriculum and high-quality instructional materials that are tightly aligned to state standards, challenging all students to achieve to their full potential. With over 700 courses and more than 7,000 units of study available to PWCS educators, students will have access to learning experiences designed around a rigorous, locally developed curriculum that is grounded in the Virginia Standards of Learning, and enhanced with engaging learning tasks and high-quality instructional materials. These experiences are available to educators and can be delivered through an online learning management software platform, Canvas.

As part of PWCS' commitment to equity for students in every school, each site will be provided with the following high-quality resources for literacy instructions, Houghton-Mifflin-Harcourt *Into Reading* (K-5), *Into Literature* (6-8), and Savvas Learning *myPerspectives* (9-12), providing access to high quality resources for literacy instruction. Additionally, a robust selection of advanced reading text will be provided to support instruction in advanced academic literature courses (such as IB, Cambridge, and AP). This consistent integration of the new instructional materials will be incorporated into the Division's curriculum units of study. Purchase and deployment of high-quality instructional materials will be supported by professional learning opportunities for staff.

### **Funding Commitments:**

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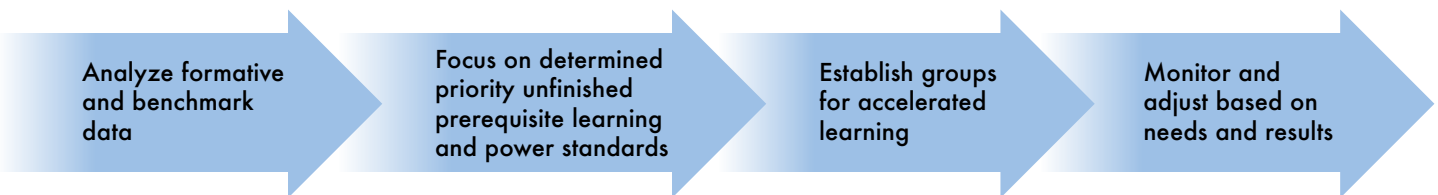
- ▶ Curriculum units in Canvas aligned to student learning needs, background, and interest (includes technology) provided to all schools;
- ▶ Common assessments and universal screeners for curriculum units and academic growth/progress;
- ▶ Lexia Core5 for individualized adaptive acceleration for all students at all reading levels including advanced learners, struggling readers, students with disabilities, and English Learners (Pre-K-5);
- ▶ Lexia PowerUp for individualized adaptive literacy acceleration for all students at all reading levels including advanced learners, struggling readers, students with disabilities, and English Learners (grades 6-12);
- ▶ Fifteen instructional coaching positions shared amongst identified priority schools; and
- ▶ Per-pupil funding for High-Dosage Tutoring provided to all schools based on student need.

### **3 Acceleration of Learning through High-Dosage Tutoring, Needed Interventions, and Extended/Expanded Learning Opportunities**

Different from remediation, acceleration of learning is a focus on instruction of the priority unfinished prerequisite learning and power standards that are necessary for the understanding of new grade level/course content. Extended learning times and High-Dosage Tutoring are two ways to support this acceleration. Additionally, common assessments establish a culture of collaboration and transparency, helping educators adjust instructional strategies.

In the 2020-21 school year, PWCS implemented a phased approach to onboard stakeholders with implementation of MasteryConnect in Year 1. During the 2020-21, Year 1 of implementation, there were 1,363,037 standards scored through all school levels in MasteryConnect. In Year 2 of implementation, by June 2022, there will be 2,726,074 standards scored as a measure of assessment in MasteryConnect. Utilizing MasteryConnect to assess student learning in all areas will provide Professional Learning Communities of educators, school-based leaders, and Division teams with essential data to address Unfinished Learning through a focus on strengthening the Instructional Core. The Instructional Core is “composed of the teacher, and the student in the presence of content (Instructional Rounds in Education, 2009). Because the Instructional Core is at the center of the learning task, student learning will improve when teachers have a greater understanding of their students’ need, instructional practices to address their learning gaps, and the specific learning task necessary to address the content.

PWCS has selected MasteryConnect as it makes learning results visible, and clearly communicates the levels of learning for each student by standard. In addition to improving the Instructional Core, MasteryConnect also increases the information available to school leaders to have instructionally focused conversations with teachers and Professional Learning Communities. According to the Wallace Foundation (2021), school leaders have the potential to positively affect school outcomes when they have the skills needed to focus on instructional practices with teachers, as well as the skills to build data-driven, school-wide structures. Finally, we are committed to provide schools with a data reporting tool dashboard that connects with MasteryConnect, providing data in real-time to data users, and increasing organizational coherence.



#### **Common assessments**

Through a systematic common approach to identify needs through data and assessment, we identify gaps and assess learning by standard and will be able to:

- Provide a systematic way to respond to the universal, focused, and prioritized needs of teachers, teams, students, leaders, and schools;
- Provide specialized support, materials, and resources to schools based on identified needs and our focus on accelerating student learning; and



- Identify specialized professional learning needed to ensure teachers and leaders have the knowledge and skills to successfully accelerate and address Unfinished Learning.

### **Literacy assessments**

Baseline diagnostic assessments are necessary to identify learning gaps and opportunities to enhance student learning through acceleration and personalized learning. The Office of Student Learning recommends continued use of:

- Virginia Kindergarten Readiness Program (VKRP) literacy component.
- Universal Phonological Awareness Literacy screener, (PALS), for grades K-2, administered in the fall, with the addition of winter and spring administrations.
- Writing sample analysis for grades 1-5 in the fall and spring.
- PWCS Common Performance Tasks or MasteryConnect (3-5) assessments for each PWCS unit of study in math, English language arts, science, and history and social science.
- Two SOL growth assessments (3-5) twice per year and culminating end of year SOL, along with three Houghton Mifflin Harcourt (HMH) Growth Measures in September, February, and June.

### **Numeracy assessments**

- Virginia Kindergarten Readiness Program (VKRP) mathematics component.
- Assessing Math Concepts (AMC) currently administered at all Title I K-2 elementary classrooms, expanded to all elementary schools.

### **High-Dosage Tutoring and Needed Intervention**

High-Dosage Tutoring is a consistent, intensive, and targeted tutoring approach that is focused on acceleration of learning and the most essential prerequisite skills and knowledge needed to fully access grade level content. Kraft and Goldstein (2020) point to High-Dosage Tutoring as a promising way to aid schools' efforts to facilitate additional instruction. High-Dosage Tutoring that is directly tied to classroom content helping students succeed in their coursework can substantially accelerate learning in both math and reading for the most struggling students. This tutoring must integrate grade level content to ensure understanding of the application to the new learning. However, it is important to note that High-Dosage Tutoring is not remediation and it is most effective when it occurs at least three times a week during the school day with individual or small groups of three or less students. To ensure effectiveness, tutors should be certified teachers, experienced with the content area of focus and trained in all aspects of acceleration. Finally, this tutoring should be sustained over the course of the year.

### **Extended/Expanded Learning Opportunities**

There are several advantages to providing extended learning opportunities to students, including but not limited to the reduction of risky behavior after school, diminished crime, increased physical health, and decreased high school dropout rates (Mette, 2016). Extended learning time interventions, including week-long acceleration academies staffed with highly effective teachers and some double-dose math structures, show strong evidence of effectiveness. After school offerings, extended school day, Saturday school, and

summer programs, can be offered to provide targeted support to students in need.

**Funding Commitments:**

- ▶ Per-pupil funding for extended/expanded learning at identified schools receiving focused or prioritized supports, to include before school, after school, co-curricular and/or extra-curricular activities/opportunities;
- ▶ One full-time teaching assistant position per focused or priority schools (one per every 500 students); and
- ▶ Per-pupil funding for High-Dosage Tutoring available to all schools (based on individual student need).

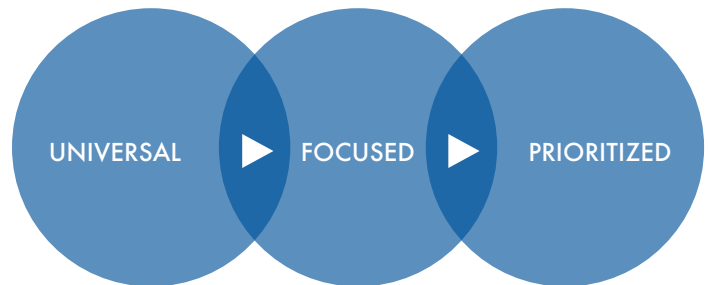
**4 High-quality, just-in-time professional learning**

PWCS is committed to providing professional learning for teachers and leaders to have the knowledge and skills to plan and implement unfinished and accelerated learning for all students.

Professional learning needs and offerings are aligned to the Priority Indicator Decision Matrix, thus providing a consistent and equitable approach to addressing unfinished and accelerated learning. Best practices in professional learning include theory and discussion, modeling, practice with feedback, and follow-up coaching in the classroom. Joyce and Shower (2002) confirm that practice and coaching feedback predict the greatest increase in knowledge, skill acquisition, and use in the classroom, which in-turn provides the greatest opportunity for academic achievement for all students.

**Division-wide Professional Learning**

A FOCUS ON CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT  
Equitable - Relevant - Aligned - Data Driven - Results-Oriented



**Funding Commitments:**

All schools will receive professional learning in the following focus areas:

- ▶ Instructional Core best practices;
- ▶ Instructional Rounds protocol Culturally Responsive Instruction;
- ▶ School culture and student and family re-engagement;
- ▶ Best practices for English Learners, special education students, and advanced learners;
- ▶ Quarterly training for administrators to support use of at-risk index to identify the students who are most in need of services; and
- ▶ Additional professional learning for focus and priority schools based on ongoing student academic assessment data throughout the school year.

## 5 Social emotional support services

PWCS is committed to ensuring the emotional well-being of our students and staff to ensure our communities thrive. Social-emotional support can be particularly important for students with disabilities as it emphasizes relationships and social interactions, helping students to develop a sense of safety and belonging. Virtual learning has taken a heavy toll on all students including students with disabilities and their families, so it is important to continue building relationships and support individual student needs upon the continued return to in-person instruction. Schools will receive support to assess student and staff emotional needs and lay the foundation for focused engagement and healing. As such, PWCS will focus on creating supportive school environments and strong teacher-student relationships that will remove barriers to learning and speed recovery from learning loss.

### Considerations for the Division

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- What universal screening tools can be used to consistently measure the social/emotional impacts of the pandemic, and nationwide discussions on race, on student learning?
- What steps must be taken to strengthen relationships between adults and students?
- What professional learning opportunities must be made available to teachers, at the start of the school year, so they may take steps to connect with learners' social emotional experience?
- What strategies should be implemented in classrooms to build confidence in uncertain learners?
- What systems are in place at the school level to ensure that students can be referred for more intense mental health services should they be needed?
- What professional learning opportunities must be made available to school-based mental health staff so they may support student's mental health and wellness?
- What can be done to support teacher wellness so they can in turn support student wellness?

### Considerations for schools

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- How can we deliver a social/emotional screener to students at the start of the school year?
- How can we make decisions about our next steps after analyzing the data?
- What are the strengths of the members of our school-based mental health team?
- How can we help teachers refine their delivery of lessons around social/emotional learning to start the school year?
- How can we take steps to ensure that teacher's wellness is a priority in addition to student wellness?

### **Funding Commitments:**

- ▶ Prepare resources for school administrators to support positive staff culture and well-being;
- ▶ Prepare teacher lesson plans, and online social and emotional learning library for students in grades K-12;
- ▶ Social Emotional Learning Curriculum;
- ▶ Part time social/emotional learning coach for focus schools and full time social/emotional learning coaches for priority schools;
- ▶ Staff training for identification of mental health concerns and implementation of supportive strategies;
- ▶ Grief and Loss Groups/Short-term and Long-term individual counseling;
- ▶ Direct staff access to counseling and referral to long-term emotional support resources; and
- ▶ Division-wide student support teams to identify and case manage students with emotional needs that have impacted learning.

## **6 Re-engagement of students and families**

PWCS is committed to motivating and partnering with families while increasing family engagement opportunities that support educational excellence for all students. Re-engagement for students with impacted attendance rates, English Learners, and economically disadvantaged students and families who have been disparately impacted by the pandemic are a focus. A co-designed model for family re-engagement will be placed in schools, providing opportunities for families to work together with educators and school leaders, gathering feedback, and establishing shared commitments for student success.

Family engagement is key to student academic success. Impacts of COVID-19 have exposed many disparities for families with lack of access to resources. Additionally, the pandemic calls for new ways to re-engage families and encourage meaningful partnerships. PWCS is committed to re-engaging families with a focus on equity, participation, trust, and collaboration. Our efforts will be centered around:

- **More inclusive outreach:** The forced shift to connecting virtually rather than in-person has resulted in many schools holding curricular presentations, meetings, and parent conferences via videoconference or recorded video. Though done out of necessity, this transition has actually increased access by removing barriers of time and place. Now, families can access information-rich meetings from various locations and at various times.
- **Access to academic content and resources:** With the pivot to virtual learning, students have been given devices and tools to take home and access developmentally appropriate teaching and learning. Educators have found that coaching families on ways to use these resources leads to more productive and targeted practice.
- **Grace, compassion, and support:** So many families have been negatively impacted by the

COVID-19 pandemic. Educators have found that, in order to effectively connect with families, they must remember to have grace for students and families who are trying their best but are likely overwhelmed.

- **Systemic leadership:** A commitment to families must be reflected in the processes at each school. Being aware of values and traditions as well as the importance of leading inclusive schools will reflect the commitment to family engagement.

**Funding Commitments:**

- ▶ Monthly parent engagement series designed for English Learner families to inform parents of Division opportunities, school program offerings, academic, and social and emotional supports to supplement the student experience;
- ▶ Family engagement support through home visits on weekends and evenings by trained staff;
- ▶ Individual post-secondary planning support outside of school hours;
- ▶ Office of Student Services in-person events and on demand Parent Support Series;
- ▶ Provide Special Education Resource Center events for parents;
- ▶ Parent liaisons for schools with impacted attendance rates and lower enrollment rates because of the pandemic; and
- ▶ Community-based case management through collaboration with local agencies for mental health and basic needs (food, shelter, clothing).

**Key strategies and progress monitoring in support of our key commitments to ALL learners**

**Goal:** Key strategies focused on the Instructional Core

Ensure integrity to the learning process for 100% of students by focusing on the Instructional Core (City, 2018) in all classrooms.

1. Provide Instructional Rounds training to teachers and leaders which includes training on the Instructional Core.
2. Analyze data, complete root cause analysis for areas of need, and determine Division-wide and school-based problems of practice.
3. Conduct Division-wide Instructional Rounds in schools on a regular basis.
4. Utilize Instructional Rounds data to determine and implement coordinated support services based on needs.

## Goal:

By the end of the 2021-22 school year, increase academic achievement for 100% of students through equitable access to rigorous, high-quality, culturally relevant curriculum and core materials.

### Key strategies to provide equitable access to rigorous, high-quality, culturally relevant, curriculum and core materials

1. Conduct a needs assessment to determine core material resources at all schools for all content areas and/or courses.
2. Develop a plan to address identified resource needs through the purchase and distribution of core material resources.
3. Curriculum will incorporate universal design principles to ensure equitable access to all learners.
4. All teachers will utilize the Division provided course/content curriculum.
5. All teachers will follow consistent course/content curriculum pacing across teachers and schools.
6. As the Division phases in more universal screeners and common assessments in the core content areas at all levels, all teachers will consistently assess students utilizing these identified assessments.
7. Additional materials, resources, and professional development will be provided to teachers and schools based on student and teacher needs as determined by results and trends across teachers, content areas, schools, and levels.

## Goal:

By the end of the 2021-22 school year, accelerate the learning of 100% of students in all subject areas with a focus on identified student populations who were disparately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

### Key strategies to accelerate learning through High-Dosage Tutoring, needed interventions, and extended/expanded learning opportunities

1. Provide universal training to all teachers and leaders.
2. Analyze baseline, universal, formative, and benchmark assessments.
3. Determine Unfinished Learning gaps.
4. Identify essential unfinished prerequisite skills and knowledge as well as power standards.
5. Create groups for accelerated learning as appropriate.
6. Consistently monitor progress and make instructional adjustments based on needs.
7. Provide universal ongoing professional learning to teachers, leaders, and other tutors.
8. Provide High-Dosage Tutoring based on needs determined for individual and/or small groups of students of three or less.
9. Schedule tutoring sessions to occur for 30-45 minutes at least three times per week, preferably during the school day.
10. Consistently progress monitor and make instructional adjustments based on need.

- 11. Use high-quality curriculum.
- 12. Provide extended learning sessions during the regular school year.
- 13. Ensure tutoring and extended learning class sizes of no more than 15 students.
- 14. Provide certified teachers.

## Goal:

By the end of the 2021-22 school year, 100% of teachers and school leaders will have completed high quality professional learning on the key commitments and best practices.

### Key Strategies to deliver high-quality, just in time professional learning

- 1. Align professional learning to the Priority Indicator Decision Matrix to meet varying needs in an equitable and consistent manner.
- 2. Identify key outcomes for the professional learning.
- 3. Create opportunities in the professional learning for practice, feedback, and coaching.
- 4. Provide opportunities beyond one-time experiences, such as train-the-trainer models.
- 5. Provide professional learning for building common knowledge, implementation, and progress monitoring for: Instructional Rounds, High-Dosage Tutoring, accelerated learning, and professional learning community tenants.

## Goal:

By the end of the 2021-22 school year, provide 100% of staff members and students with the social and emotional support needed to ensure student availability for learning.

### Key Strategies for Social and Emotional Support Services

- 1. Provide Division-wide social and emotional needs assessment.
- 2. Conduct a parent/guardian social and emotional survey to gather baseline data.
- 3. Provide lesson plan templates for teachers at each grade level to set the stage for social and emotional support.
- 4. Provide access to social and emotional support library resources available to all teachers, students, and parents.
- 5. Deliver training for teachers in self-care and healing-centered practices to support students.
- 6. Provide targeted support for Social Emotional Learning and Healing in those schools identified to receive focused or prioritized supports.

## Goal:

By the end of the 2021-22 school year, re-engage 100% of families, providing access to essential information and resources needed to support their student.

### Key Strategies for re-engagement of families

- 1. Conduct monthly parent meetings focused on knowledge, skills, and strategies to support authentic partnerships and ongoing advocacy
- 2. Conduct home visits to support structures and strategies towards improving academic and developmental assets.

3. Offer planning with students and their families for post-secondary offerings.
4. Provide targeted support for families of diverse students and those identified as prioritized such as students with disabilities, advanced learners, gifted students, and English Learners. This may also include students who are identified as a member of more than one of these groups.

## Goals and Best Practices for Prioritized Student Populations

### Goal: English Learner considerations and best practices

**By the end of the 2021-22 school year, 100% of English Learners will increase language performance by at least 10% from the previous year as measured by ACCESS testing.**

English Learner students have dual learning needs: they need to acquire English to have fuller access to school and society, and they need to learn academic content alongside their Non-EL peers. These dual needs often manifest as a tension in EL education in terms of the relative focus schools place on ELs' linguistic versus academic instruction, often in a context of limited time, human, and material resources. As such, ensuring that EL supports do not supplant general education content is also critical. English language development instruction must take place daily with integrity and fidelity (Umanski, 2020) supporting PWCS' Language Allocation Plan for ELs. For this to take place, educators should prioritize the role of language and support ELs with both language and content, making sure ELs' schedules, services, and supports are designed with that purpose in mind.

PWCS recognizes the unique challenges ELs faced as a result of COVID-19. EL students should receive additional specialized instruction to support their language development. ESOL teachers must identify specific goals and intentionally design aligned activities that support each of the groups identified by Virginia Department of Education.

- **Students with Interrupted Formal Education (SLIFE);**
- **Newcomers** - Students newly arrived in the country (12 months or less);
- **Dually Identified Students** - EL students identified with a disability; and
- **Long-Term English Learners** - Students who have remained on the same language proficiency level for three or more years.

### Best Practices for English Learners

Schools should support the social, academic, and written language of ELs by:

1. Creating schedules that maximize co-teaching and the opportunity to learn with non-EL peers.



2. Prioritizing academic language instruction during core academic content instruction.
3. Utilize culturally relevant text that supports literacy.
4. Creating conditions where ELs receive direct instruction from a certified ESOL teacher.
5. Using high-quality lessons specifically designed for language development.
6. Forecasting language needs for students to successfully engage with content standards.
7. Ensuring teachers of ELs attend essential training that will support their understanding of how language development happens and the interrelationships between language and content (Darling-Hammond et al., 2012).

### **Goal:** Best Practices for Special Education Students

By the end of the 2021-22 school year, every IEP team will have considered if a student requires recovery services.

To support and provide services to students with disabilities by:

1. Utilizing progress monitoring to measure student progress in academic, social/emotional, and behavioral areas of need as laid out in the 504 or IEP.
2. Using a thoughtful approach to matching the students' areas of need with research-based tools that target the students' need.
3. Utilizing specially designed instruction with each student, and making instructional decisions based on relevant data.
4. Using high-quality tools in areas such as assistive technology, transition to adulthood, speech and language, and academics.
5. Attending to behavioral and social needs through related services as needed.
6. Ensuring that teachers, paraprofessionals, bus drivers, and all of those who provide services receive necessary training.

## **Post-secondary student support considerations and best practices**

### **Goal:**

By the end of the 2021-22 school year, 100% of graduates will report a post-secondary plan that is created in collaboration with their family, school counselor and other education support professionals.

PWCS recognizes that gaps in career awareness and post-secondary planning are present due to lost learning time in the previous two school years. To that end, school counselors and other support professionals will accelerate student learning in the following areas as needed:

- Academic and Career Plan Portfolio
- Academic and Career Plan
- Post-Secondary Education Research

### Best practices for post-secondary support

To support the post-secondary planning process, schools should support students by:

1. Ensuring that each elementary student’s Academic and Career Plan Portfolio is in process and benchmarks are established, achieved, and added to the student portfolio.
2. Ensuring that each middle school student has created their Academic and Career Plan prior to the end of their 8th grade year.
3. Ensuring that each high school student has updated his/her career plan prior to the start of 10th grade and 12th grade.
4. Using high-quality lessons to teach the essential components of career clusters, pathways, and goals.
5. Involving student’s families in the career and post-secondary planning process to the greatest extent possible.

## Advanced learners considerations and best practices

### Goal:

Each year, increase the participation and performance of students in advanced programs.

Virtual learning has long been considered an effective way to meet personalized learning goals, including advanced academic needs. When advanced learners work at their own pace on assignments matched to their readiness level and/or interests, it gives them ownership over their learning and fosters agency. However, at the start of last school year, many students did not have the self-regulation skills needed to work remotely – they struggled with distractions at home, new technologies, and task completion. They missed the in-person interaction with peers and teachers, as well as the collaborative projects and hands-on problem solving that are a big part of the gifted program. Anxiety, stress, and feelings of isolation were ongoing concerns during the pandemic, as gifted students can be particularly sensitive. As a result, teachers focused on meeting social-emotional needs, in addition to academic needs, throughout the school year.

The virtual learning experience was challenging in the beginning, but advanced learners adapted quickly. As the year progressed, they acclimated to the online environment and established routines. Technology proficiency improved, engagement increased, and the quality of student thinking/production soared. Collaboration between the gifted teacher and classroom teacher was more frequent and meaningful during virtual learning. Technology tools like Nearpod and Desmos were used effectively to differentiate instruction for advanced and gifted learners in the advanced course classroom and in the gifted program. Advanced students may not have mastered every grade-level objective, but they grew into more self-sufficient, independent thinkers and learners.

Due to the lack of exposure to some units/objectives, we can anticipate that gifted

students will most likely have gaps in their learning next school year. Collaborative planning between the gifted teacher and classroom teacher can help close those gaps and accelerate recovery. Pre-assessment will be an important strategy to determine what students already know and what needs to be taught/reinforced in flexible groups. Gifted teachers can support those efforts by leading enrichment groups, pushing into classrooms, and providing differentiated resources/strategies to classroom teachers. They can also target gaps during pull-out resource services. An increased emphasis will be placed on nurturing collaboration and communication skills, two areas that were difficult to address during virtual instruction. At the high school level, asynchronous options developed out of necessity will allow for greater participation in gifted seminar services moving forward.

### **Best practices for advanced learners**

1. Observational and diagnostic assessment data will be used to identify underrepresented students for gifted services and participation in advanced academic course work.
2. Collaborative planning between the gifted teachers and classroom teachers can help to close gaps and accelerate recovery for advanced learners.
3. Pre-assessment will help determine what students already know and what needs to be taught/reinforced in flexible groups to accelerate learning.
4. Gifted teachers lead enrichment groups, pushing into classrooms, and providing differentiated resources/strategies to classroom teachers.
5. Teachers of advanced courses and gifted resource teachers target gaps during pull-out resource services.
6. Increase emphasis on nurturing collaboration and communication skills, two areas that were difficult to address during virtual instruction.
7. At the high school level, asynchronous options developed out of necessity will allow for greater participation in gifted seminar services moving forward.

## Family engagement considerations and best practices

**Goal:** To increase 100% participation of families through broader awareness of school supports, Division, school and community resources, as well as actionable strategies to increase their participation in the learning process as measured by Division-wide and individual school surveys.

COVID-19 has exposed the harsh reality that many students and families are living with limited access to enough food, stable housing, or health care, and no savings to fall back on after a sudden loss in income. Additionally, distance learning also highlighted the challenges EL and economically disadvantaged families experience with digital literacy as many families don't own a computer or lack quality internet service. PWCS looks to re-engage families by communicating about the importance of student attendance and supports.

### Best practices for family engagement

1. Provide translation and interpretation of school and Division-wide documents and events.
2. Deliver hybrid events to allow for flexibility in participation of families with childcare, transportation, and/or employment challenges.
3. Seek ongoing feedback from families on the effectiveness of the instructional plan.
4. Multilingual launch of Advisory Council to increase participation of multilingual families represented in the school Division.
5. Host Title I family engagement events.
6. Host Special Education parent resource center events.
7. Host Parent Learning Series offerings.
8. Host Division-wide events on mental health, instructional best practices, and just-in-time topics based on parent feedback.
9. Evaluate the impact of the plan on parent engagement and student academic achievement.

## Next steps to engage stakeholders

As part of our commitment to equity and the whole child, PWCS has established channels of communication to keep the community informed about the process for sharing public comments on the utilization of federal funds. Public meetings were held on June 15 and 22, 2021, affording community stakeholders the opportunity to present ideas on feedback on the plan. As such, PWCS is committed to ensure:

1. Schools receive timely information about the Division's Unfinished Learning Plan to support schools as well as expectations for students and educators.
2. School leaders and Division staff look at student data to inform the development of curriculum, and assignment of support staff, and to identify essential support for students.

3. Staff is provided with high-quality professional learning that will support diverse student as well as teachers.
4. Schools prioritize the resources needed to support the most vulnerable students.

## Equitable Resource Allocation

The PWCS Unfinished Learning Plan provides schools and students an equitable, relevant, aligned, data-driven, and research-based approach to our commitment to overcoming the learning impacts of the pandemic and ensuring the academic success for all students. Priority indicators were identified to ensure that disparately impacted schools and students receive the resources, support, and funding they need as we move out of the pandemic. The resources, support, and funding follow a systemic model that focuses on the three essential priorities.

**Universal** – resources, support, and funding to support **ALL** schools

**Focused** – additional assets, support, and funding for some schools where Priority Indicator data signifies the need for further resources

**Prioritized** – additional assets, support, and funding for a few schools where the Priority Indicator data signifies the need for more intensive services and resources

Given the research that highlights the disparities of COVID-19 and its impact on our student populations, and most vulnerable learners, this process aims to meet and/or exceed the specific needs of our Division student enrollment membership.

Priority Indicators include student membership demographics (e.g., diverse learner needs and percent of students with disabilities, English Learners, and economically disadvantaged students), the rate at which students enter and leave school, student academic performance (two or more failing grades in middle and high school courses), early literacy achievement, chronic absenteeism, and COVID-19 rates by student zip code.

## Unfinished Learning school priority indicator categories

Human Resources	Diverse learner needs and factors impacting opportunity	Student performance and engagement	COVID community impact
Stability of the teaching staff	Percent of students ... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• With diverse learner needs</li> <li>• Who are English Learners</li> <li>• Who are economically disadvantaged (eligible for free and reduced lunch)</li> <li>• That leave a school during a given year (mobility)</li> </ul>	Percent of students ... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Failing two or more courses (MS/HS)</li> <li>• Who are identified for intervention in early literacy (ES)</li> <li>• Who are chronically absent</li> </ul>	Percent of students ... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Residing in areas hardest hit by COVID</li> </ul>

Additionally, separate indicators for social-emotional and mental wellness (e.g., counseling contacts for personal concerns, as well as survey results on student safety and wellbeing) were established and data analyzed to determine student and school needs for services and support.

## School Priority Social and Emotional Indicators

Indicator/measure	Description
Percent of student conferences that were for personal reasons	<p>Based on the total number of student conferences recorded during the 2019-20 and 2020-21 school years held by non-teaching staff.</p> <p>This measure is an analysis of the number of student conferences conducted for personal reasons as a percentage of the total conferences recorded.</p> <p>Data assumptions: More conferences conducted for personal reasons equates to more social/emotional need for students.</p>
Student satisfaction with caring school domain in the PWCS Division-wide Survey (2019-20)	<p>Represents an average of the satisfaction rating based on student perception of caring in their school building.</p> <p>Data assumption: Lower satisfaction in student beliefs about a caring school atmosphere equates to an increased need for student initiatives to foster a caring atmosphere.</p>
Student satisfaction with safe school domain in the PWCS Division-wide Survey (2019-20)	<p>Represents an average of the satisfaction rating based on student perception of feeling safe in their school building.</p> <p>Data assumption: Lower satisfaction in student beliefs about a safe school atmosphere equates to an increased need for student initiatives to foster a safe and supportive atmosphere.</p>
Staff satisfaction with caring school domain in the PWCS Division-wide Survey (2020-21)	<p>Represents an average of the satisfaction rating based on staff perception of caring in their school building.</p> <p>Data assumption: Lower satisfaction in staff beliefs about a caring school atmosphere equates to an increased need for staff initiatives to foster a caring atmosphere.</p>
Staff satisfaction with safe school domain in the PWCS Division-wide Survey (2020-21)	<p>Represents an average of the satisfaction rating based on staff perception of safety in their school building.</p> <p>Data assumption: Lower satisfaction in staff beliefs about a safe school atmosphere equates to an increased need for student initiatives to foster a safe and supportive atmosphere.</p>

A significant amount of academic success in schools is achieved through expanding the opportunities for principals as leaders in their communities. Principal influence on student achievement is only second to teacher influence in the classroom (Wallace 2021). Our most successful principals engage in building trust in their community, empower teacher leaders through a distributive leadership model, and establish systems and processes through organizational management.



School leaders will receive additional funding over the 2021-22 and 2022-23 school years to implement the Unfinished Learning plan. The additional funding will be determined through our Universal, Focused, and Prioritized approach that recognizes our most vulnerable and marginalized communities by the pandemic.

**In total, the Division will distribute approximately \$88 million in additional funds over the next two years.**

Overall, the Division's recovery plan is aligned to the core values of equity, integrity, and academic success for all students. Student needs and factors impacting academic and opportunity gaps, student performance and engagement, social-emotional well-being, and the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on students within a school's community are all factors the School Division is using to determine the distribution and implementation of additional resources, supports, and services to schools and students.

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