

# Return to Learning Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind Fall 2020

(Updated as of October 19, 2020)



The Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind (CSDB)—in collaboration with families, school districts and community partners—educates and inspires learners throughout the state, birth through age 21, to achieve their full human potential through comprehensive, individualized academic, transition, residential and outreach programs and resources.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

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Cover Page .....	1
Table of Contents .....	2
Return to Learning	
Letter from Superintendent Benham .....	3
Instructional Program .....	4
Registration .....	4
School .....	5
Classrooms .....	5
Cafeteria .....	6
Transportation .....	6
Student Life .....	7
Residential Program .....	7
Activities/Athletics .....	7
Outreach .....	8
Early Intervention .....	8
School-Aged Services .....	8
Sign Language Classes.....	8
Sick Staff or Student .....	9
COVID-19 Guidance .....	9
Exclusion Criteria .....	10
Safety Guidelines (in review).....	10
Resources .....	11
2020-2021 School Year Calendar .....	12

# Return to Learning

Dear CSDB Families:

August 7, 2020

As school leaders, one of the biggest challenges we are facing during this pandemic is knowing what kind of learning model we should start the school year in and how we should determine if/when that learning model should change, to provide the best learning environment possible, while keeping our students and staff safe. It is critical that our students get a good start to the school year and continue to learn and thrive. To do that, our students and staff must have the best chance possible of staying healthy.

We must rely on COVID-19 data provided by El Paso County Public Health and Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, to help guide us in our conversations and decisions. To the greatest extent possible, decisions about school, both at the start of the year and in the months to come, are based on science and facts. There are four sets of data we evaluate when making decisions about school:

- Percent of positive COVID-19 tests in El Paso County and Colorado: daily and 14-day rolling average
- Daily hospitalizations in El Paso County and other Colorado counties where our students live
- 14-day COVID-19 incident rates per 100,000 in El Paso County and Colorado residents
- Daily new COVID-19 cases in El Paso County and Colorado counties where our students live.

In addition, CSDB sent out surveys for families and held Question and Answer sessions with staff members. Knowing what our stakeholders think is another important factor as we make these decisions.

Earlier this month, health department information suggested that a return to in-person learning for all students would be possible. But, the COVID-19 rate has increased since then, leading us to believe a change to our plans for the start of school is necessary. As of today, CSDB will be reopening in phases depending on data from El Paso County Public Health and the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment:

## Phase 1: begins August 24<sup>th</sup>

**Preschool-Grade 2 students:** Return to **in-person or remote-learning**  
(Masks are recommended for preschool-Grade 2 students who choose in-person learning.)

**Grades 3-5 students:** Begin August 24<sup>th</sup> on-line learning **ONLY** with a possible date of **September 28<sup>th</sup>** to in-person learning (On-line learning will continue for those whose parents selected that).

**Grades 6-Bridges-to-Life students:** Begin on-line learning **ONLY** for first quarter.

**IN PERSON, ON CAMPUS LEARNING WILL NOT BE AVAILABLE FOR GRADES 3- BTL IN PHASE 1**

## Phase 2: begins September 28<sup>th</sup>

**Preschool – Grade 2 students:** Continue with in-person or on-line learning.

**Grades 3-5 students:** Begin in-person learning or continue with on-line learning.

**Grades 6-Bridges-to-Life students:** Continue on-line learning **ONLY** until the end of first quarter.

**IN PERSON, ON CAMPUS LEARNING WILL NOT BE AVAILABLE FOR GRADES 6-BTL IN PHASE 2**

## Phase 3: begins October 13<sup>th</sup>

**Preschool – Grade 2 students:** Continue with in-person learning or on-line learning.

**Grades 3–5 students:** Continue with in-person learning or on-line learning.

**Grades 6–Bridges-to-Life students:** Begin in-person learning or continue on-line learning.

**Related services may be provided on-campus as arranged on an individual basis with service providers.**

This fall's remote learning model will be one that is consistent, robust, and engaging for our students. Staff will receive training during the August 10-21, 2020 professional development sessions, which will help them implement best practices and provide consistency for students.

Thank you for your continued support, patience, trust and flexibility as we prepare to begin the new school year.

Sincerely,



Dr. Nancy Benham, Superintendent

# Instructional Program

Upon reopening, a unique opportunity exists to create a new and better “normal” to meet the learning needs of all students, at CSDB. It will be critical to set and maintain high grade-level expectations for academic growth and development.

CSDB plans for in-person or remote models of learning. That means a majority of the students are instructed through in-person learning, and a small group of students continue to be instructed through remote learning, if they are high-risk or from a high-risk household, or parents have chosen to continue remote learning. Principals will send out additional information to families regarding specific times for device pick-up. ***Students will remain in their chosen learning mode (in-person or remote) until the end of each phase. See details in Superintendent Benham’s letter (pg. 3). At such time, parents can make a decision to remain in remote learning or move to in-person learning.***

Canvas, the CSDB learning platform, will be used by all teachers, creating a blended learning environment for all students. As a result, when a shift occurs between in-person and remote learning, there will be no disruption to instruction. If CSDB returns to remote learning, families will be notified of the remote learning plan.

Mainstream and work experience options will not be offered, August—January 2021. The options will be reevaluated after January 20, 2021. Pikes Peak Community Classes will be offered on-line only, for students who meet the criteria.

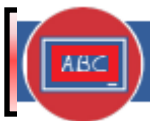
Preschool begins August 24, 2020 and will be held Monday – Thursday, 8:30 a.m.– 12:30 p.m., and includes students eating lunch at school. There is no preschool on Fridays.

## REGISTRATION

Early Registration scheduled for August 7<sup>th</sup> and Registration Day scheduled for August 16<sup>th</sup>, **have been cancelled**. In lieu of registration days, registration packets need to be mailed to CSDB (33. N. Institute St, 80903) or can be dropped off in front of the administration building at CSDB on August 17, 18, and 19, 2020. Please pull into the administration building parking lot on Institute St. on one of those days, and a staff member will be available to collect your paperwork. In the days prior to school starting, a CSDB nurse will contact families to discuss medical needs of students as appropriate.

All Students grades preschool-Transition pay technology fees. To pay by credit card, please call the front desk, 719-578-2100 or use the online payment option (found on [www.csdb.org](http://www.csdb.org))

CSDB is pleased to announce that we are now able to **take payments online**. By working with the Colorado Statewide Internet Portal Authority (SIPA) on their secured platform, you can click on the button to make your payment with a credit card or e-check. Credit cards accepted are American Express, Discover, Mastercard, and Visa.



# Instructional Program

## SCHOOL

CSDB students, who begin with in-person learning, will be in an environment focused on supporting the health and safety of students and staff. To do this, common areas such as the Administration Building front desk office, restrooms, libraries, cafeterias, gyms, and hallways will be clearly marked with wall and floor reminders to social distance and wear face coverings, as appropriate. Tactile and visual reminders will be provided in an age appropriate manner for students. Staff will ask students to separate if standing too close together and to put face coverings on if social distancing is not feasible. Additionally, some areas such as the media centers and cafeteria will be used on a limited basis to reduce congregating. Custodial staff will disinfect common areas throughout the day and will address high trafficked areas each night.

CSDB has invested in a variety of resources to support reopening schools, including: purchasing additional hand sanitizing and disinfecting tools, for every classroom, that can be used to clean areas quickly; purchasing face coverings for students and staff; installing plexiglass safety panels in classrooms and in common areas, installing water stations to fill personal water bottles (no water fountains in use), and adding hand sanitizing stations.

CSDB has limited outside guests, including visitors, volunteers and presenters. Families will be asked to make an appointment to meet with school staff, to reduce the number of individuals in common spaces. Teleconferencing will be encouraged as a way to stay connected as well as increased email and phone communication. Families should ensure all emergency contacts are up-to-date in case your child needs to be picked up.

The Colorado Department of Education will be providing school districts with guidance regarding tracking attendance rates for COVID-related absences. Any important information provided by CDE will be communicated to parents as necessary. CSDB will record and report attendance in accordance to CDE guidelines.

## CLASSROOMS

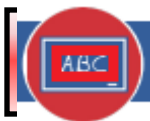
Creating positive learning environments is a high priority for CSDB. Some adjustments will be required because of the health safety practices necessary to keep staff and students in school.

Social distancing remains one of the most important aspects of decreasing the spread of COVID-19. Children's Hospital Colorado discussed the impact social distancing will have on reopening schools. Although 6 feet may not always be possible, achieving some distancing, 3-5 feet, is better than close contact. Teachers will strive to create as much space as feasible by arranging student desks and tables with as much distancing as possible, and implementing assigned seating.

To ensure social distancing and balance the number of students in a classroom space, bell schedules, class assignments, teacher availability and teacher certification will be considered.

Passing period:

- ◇ Face coverings will be required when social distancing is not possible, including transitioning between classes, safety drills and evacuation events.



# Instructional Program

## CLASSROOMS

Additionally, hand washing and hand sanitizing will be increased and included in scheduled activities. Students will be allowed to bring in hand sanitizer for personal use only; however, hand sanitizer will be available in classrooms as well. Students will be asked to leave all unnecessary items at home and only bring items required for learning. Teachers are expected to limit community items and ensure students do not share personal items. CSDB replaced former communal furniture with more individual options so students have their own workspaces. Teachers and students will be expected to sanitize work areas and supplies after use.

## CAFETERIA (CHANGE: OCTOBER 13—THE MAJORITY OF STUDENTS WILL EAT IN THE CLASSROOMS)

CSDB will continue to serve meals on-site when school is open. New health/safety protocols for students and food service staff will include hand washing or sanitizing before and after meals, wearing facial coverings in the cafeteria when not eating, and social distancing while walking to and from the cafeteria. In addition, CSDB will implement the following:

- Cafeteria meal schedules will be staggered to reduce the number of people in the cafeteria at any one time.
- Each table in the cafeteria will be limited to two (2) people, from the same cohort, assigned during the schedule meal time.
- Plexiglass dividers will be set up on each table in the cafeteria to allow for visibility yet providing separation while sitting and eating.
- Students will not go through the line in the cafeteria.
- Meals will be served table-side, in a disposable container with plastic ware, by staff to each student.
- Students may bring a lunch from home. \*Note\* No heating devices are available.
- Menus will be posted on the CSDB website and on Infinite Campus.
- Water bottles will be provided to each student for meals. The water fountain will be turned off.
- Tables, chairs and plexiglass will be cleaned by staff between each meal time.
- Microwaves will not be available for use. Kitchen areas will not be available to students or staff.
- Food service staff will clean/sanitize the tables, plexiglass and other surfaces throughout mealtimes.

Specific information regarding breakfast and lunch schedules will be provided by schools prior to school starting.

## TRANSPORTATION

Transportation will be provided from your home district per normal procedure. Home districts transportation offices will be developing safety protocols regarding students in district cars and busses and students will be expected to adhere to district safety guidelines. Any changes regarding transportation will be communicated to you through your district of residence or CSDB. Bus pick up and drop off schedules will also be provided by home districts.

Students will social distance during arrival and departure times: Monday-Thursday, 8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m., Friday, 8:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m. Additional staff will be used for increased monitoring during arrival and departure times.



# Student Life

## RESIDENTIAL PROGRAM

Upon reopening,

- Students will be assigned a room - one person per room.
- Occupancy will be limited in common areas (e.g., living rooms, kitchens) to ensure appropriate use of face coverings and social distancing. Occupancy rates will vary based on each building and room capacity.
- Dinner will be prepared in the dorm and will be eaten as a “family unit”. This allows for less interaction among students outside of their dorm/family unit.
- Cleaning will be conducted several times a day. Overnight staff will assist in cleaning/disinfecting common areas after students have gone to sleep.
- Staff and students will engage in frequent handwashing.

## ACTIVITIES AND ATHLETICS

CSDB believes activities and athletics play an integral role in student health and wellbeing; therefore, CSDB will support these programs to the extent the El Paso County Health Department and Colorado Department of Public Health will allow. CSDB remains in communication with the Colorado High School Athletic Association (CHSAA) to determine appropriate programming, including practices, meetings and competitions.

- Activities will occur on campus so as to reduce the opportunity to bring the virus back to campus. Evaluation of activity status will be ongoing.
- Activities will occur outside to the greatest extent possible as outdoor transmission is much lower than indoor transmission.
- Day students will not be allowed to stay after school for residential activities, at this time. Outside groups will not be permitted to provide services/activities to students. No large group activities or assemblies will be held in the dormitories.

CHSAA recently announced the fall sports season will be postponed until Spring 2021. “The 2020-21 season will be played with a modified sport schedule due to the on-going global pandemic. All contact sports have been moved to a season which will commence later in the calendar, and allow for playoffs and culminating events without creating new conflicts... Basketball and wrestling will begin January 4, and conclude March 6... Football and volleyball will begin March 1 and conclude with championships May 1... Track and Field may begin with practice on April 26, and concludes with the final championship June 26.”

*“The resumption of all activities and athletics are subject to change based upon any changes to national, state or local guidelines related to COVID-19.”*



Outreach Programs is committed to ensuring our families and children continue to meet milestones and develop academic skills through the variety of services provided. Since March 2020, some services shifted to remote learning, and will continue as such, through Fall 2020. The option of returning to in-person services will be evaluated prior to January 2021.

## **EARLY INTERVENTION (EI) ACTIVITIES**

### **EI SERVICES FOR CHILDREN WHO ARE DEAF OR HARD OF HEARING**

As employees of CSDB, the CO-Hears will continue to provide services to families following the guidance of CSDB. At this time, meetings with families will continue through tele-health or phone options. Meetings with the CCBs, community agencies and the CSDB team will occur remotely. Provider trainings, classes, or workshops will use videoconferencing.

The CHIP Early Intervention Providers, delivering weekly services to families are employed by or contract with the local Community Center Board. Services will follow the Early Intervention Colorado guidance, sent through the Regional CO-Hears .

### **EI SERVICES FOR CHILDREN WHO HAVE VISION LOSS**

The Teachers of the Visually Impaired (TVIs) will continue to provide direct services to families, virtually. Meetings with the CCBs or community agencies and will be held using videoconferencing.

Colorado Shared Reading Project services will continue to provide sessions via tele-health, through December, 2020. Initial sessions, ongoing sessions, and assessments will be conducted remotely. Provider meetings and workshops will be held via teleconferencing. Support to families, in using technology for sessions, will be provided as needed.

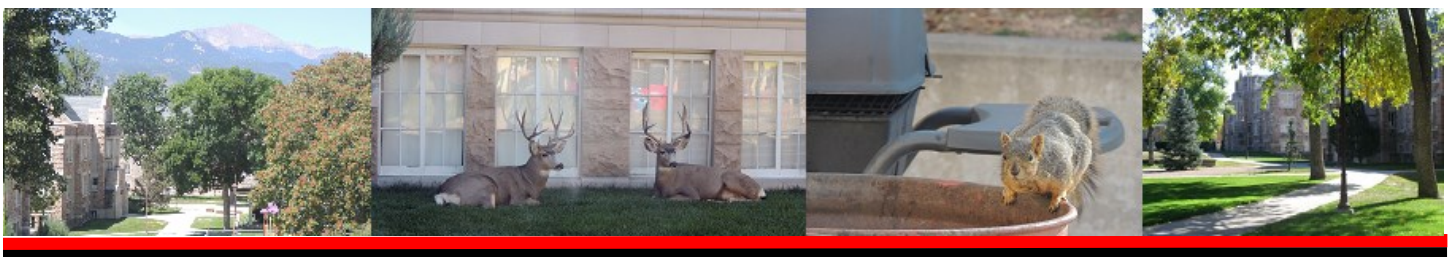
Outreach Programs continue to pilot various options for family-centered events that include literacy activities, music, and parent education. Programs, regional or statewide, will be provided using videoconferencing and/or webcast means. Survey feedback will guide these programs for the winter sessions. Support to families, in using technology for events or trainings, will be provided as needed.

## **SCHOOL-AGED SERVICES**

Contract services requested by school districts, BOCES and charter schools will be delivered virtually through the end of 2020. By providing virtual services and reducing travel to the various regions of the state, these measures may reduce the possibility of staff spreading COVID-19.

## **SIGN LANGUAGE CLASSES**

Family and Community Sign Language classes will be held virtually, through the first semester of the 2020-21 school year. The option of returning to in-person classes will be evaluated, prior to January 2021.





# Sick Staff or Student

## COVID-19 GUIDANCE

CSDB is prepared to support students and staff members who exhibit symptoms of COVID-19 or test positive for COVID-19. The Center for Disease Control established, early on in the pandemic, that certain people are more at risk of severe COVID-19 infection. Some factors can make individuals more prone to the virus than others. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-at-increased-risk.html> However, most importantly, students, staff, and parents must be diligent in self-screening daily. If exhibiting symptoms, stay home and consult with their health care provider to determine if they need to be tested.

If a staff member or student starts exhibiting COVID-like symptoms while at school:

1. The student or staff will be isolated in a designated area.
2. The nurse will be contacted to evaluate the individual to determine disposition.
3. In the case of a student, parents will be notified to pick-up the student immediately.
4. Students sent home with COVID-like symptoms or a positive COVID test will be provided remote learning opportunities.
5. The student or staff will remain at home until cleared by El Paso County Public Health and CSDB Student Health.

If a student or staff member has COVID-like symptoms or tests positive for COVID 19:

1. Seek medical care from your healthcare provider in accordance with CDC and El Paso County Public Health (EPCPH) guidelines.
2. Alert the CSDB Student Health Center (SHC) as quickly as possible to evaluate if a cohort needs to be quarantined and to begin contact tracing to determine others who may need quarantine.
3. Do not come to school until cleared by EPCPH and SHC. In most cases, this requires a 10-day isolation period unless they receive a negative COVID test and have been symptom-free for 24 hours.
4. If a family member in the same household, tests positive for COVID-19, the student or staff who lives with the person will quarantine for 14 days from their last exposure with the sick person. SHC will work with EPCPH to determine when they can return to school.
5. Staff must remain in contact with SHC for guidance on returning to work.
6. CSDB will coordinate with Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment regarding suspected and confirmed cases to determine course of action on a case by case basis.

# Sick Staff or Student

**Guidelines for Exclusion:** Identifying and separating students/staff exhibiting illness as per El Paso County Public Health <https://www.elpasocountyhealth.org/>. This requires clear expectations and communication with parents and staff. The appropriate exclusion timeframe will be dictated by Public Health and relayed to the appropriate staff member at school; this timeframe cannot be overridden by any other authority and remains the express authority of Public Health.

Exclusion criteria:

- Individuals with COVID-like symptoms, without lab confirmation, or a positive COVID-19 test result: will need to isolate (stay home) for 10 days since symptoms first appeared AND until no fever for **at least 24 hours** without medication AND improvement of symptoms.
  - ◊ Siblings and household members will quarantine for 14 days.
  - ◊ If the person with COVID-like symptoms receives a negative test, the siblings can return to school immediately. The individual with a negative test can return to school when symptoms-free for 24 hours.
- For those with other diagnosis to explain symptoms: Stay home until symptoms have improved and follow health care provider instructions to return to school.
  - ◊ Siblings and household member DO NOT need to stay home.

## **Safety Guidelines (in review):**

- Implement physical distancing at all times and to the greatest degree, wherever and whenever possible. Avoid immediate contact such as shaking or holding hands and hugging.
- Require educators and other school staff to wear face coverings or masks in school whenever possible. Teach and reinforce appropriate use of cloth face coverings among staff and students (when age and developmentally appropriate) when in the vicinity of others, particularly in indoor settings. A variety of face coverings available including clear masks to ease communication with Deaf/HH staff and students.
- Utilize additional barriers (e.g., plastic sneeze guards, face shields) in some common areas of campus for employees working directly with children or where spacing and masking may be more difficult.
- Clean, sanitize, and disinfect frequently touched surfaces multiple times per day, including education tools (e.g. books, whiteboards, computers). Have adequate supplies to support healthy hygiene.
- Shared objects should be cleaned between use.
- Students will not share materials (i.e. crayons, scissors, etc.). Keep each child's belongings separated in individually labeled storage containers, cubbies, or taken home each day and cleaned.
- Items not easily cleaned, or disinfected are removed (upholstered furniture or soft or plush toys).
- Teach and reinforce washing hands and covering coughs and sneezes among children and staff.
- Take scheduled breaks for hand hygiene. Post signs on how to stop the spread of COVID-19, properly wash hands, promote everyday protective measures, and properly wear a face covering.

# Resources and Citations

American Academy of Pediatrics. <https://services.aap.org/en/pages/2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-infections/clinical-guidance/covid-19-planning-considerations-return-to-in-person-education-in-schools/>

Center for Disease Control. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

Center for Disease Control. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-at-increased-risk.html>

Children's Hospital Colorado and University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus.

Colorado Department of Education. <https://www.cde.state.co.us/safeschools>

El Paso County Public Health Department. <https://www.elpasocountyhealth.org/>

Denver Partnership for Health. [https://www.coloradohealthinstitute.org/sites/default/files/file\\_attachments/Metro\\_Denver\\_Partnership\\_for\\_Health\\_School\\_Guidance\\_25June2020\\_0.pdf](https://www.coloradohealthinstitute.org/sites/default/files/file_attachments/Metro_Denver_Partnership_for_Health_School_Guidance_25June2020_0.pdf)



Student contact days - 183							Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind							Approved by the						
Professional Development Days - 7							2020-2021							CSDB Board of Trustees Approved 2.19.2020/Revised 7.22.2020						
Teacher contract days - 195							8:30a-3:30p M-Th							6.5 Hrs						
							8:30a-1:00p Fri							4.0 Hrs						
FIRST SEMESTER, 2020														SECOND SEMESTER, 2021						
July							July							January						
S M T W T F S														S M T W T F S						
1 2 3 4														1/1 Winter Break						
5 6 7 8 9 10 11														1/4 Professional Development						
12 13 14 15 16 17 18														1/18 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day -						
19 20 21 22 23 24 25														No School						
26 27 28 29 30 31														1/22 End of 2nd Qtr. (47 Days)						
														1/22 End of 1st Semester (93 Days)						
														18						
August							August							February						
S M T W T F S							8/4-8/7 New Staff Orientation							S M T W T F S						
1							8/10-8/13 Professional Development							2/15 Presidents' Day - No School						
2 3 (4 5 6 7) 8							8/14 School Closed							2/26 Parent Teacher Conferences						
9 (10 11 12 13) 14 15							8/24 First Day of School							7 8 9 10 11 12 13						
16 17 18 19 20 21 22							8/24 First Day of Preschool							14 15 16 17 18 19 20						
23 24 25 26 27 28 29														21 22 23 24 25 26 27						
30 31														28						
														19						
September							September							March						
S M T W T F S														S M T W T F S						
1 2 3 4 5							9/4 School Closed							3/22-3/26 Spring Break - No School						
6 7 8 9 10 11 12							9/7 Labor Day - No School							7 8 9 10 11 12 13						
13 14 15 16 17 18 19							9/25 Professional Development							14 15 16 17 18 19 20						
20 21 22 23 24 (25) 26														21 22 23 24 25 26 27						
27 28 29 30														28 29 30 31						
														18						
October							October							April						
S M T W T F S														S M T W T F S						
1 2 3							10/12 Columbus Day - No School							4/2 End of 3rd Qtr (44 Days)						
4 5 6 7 8 9 10							10/23 End of 1st Qtr (46 Days)							4/5 School Closed						
11 12 13 14 15 16 17							10/30 Parent Teacher Conferences							4 5 6 7 8 9 10						
18 19 20 21 22 23 24														11 12 13 14 15 16 17						
25 26 27 28 29 30 31														18 19 20 21 22 23 24						
														25 26 27 28 29 30						
														21						
November							November							May						
S M T W T F S														S M T W T F S						
1 2 3 4 5 6 7							11/20 School Closed							5/28 School Closed						
8 9 10 11 12 13 14							11/23-11/27 Thanksgiving Break							5/31 Memorial Day - No School						
15 16 17 18 19 20 21														2 3 4 5 6 7 8						
22 23 24 25 26 27 28														9 10 11 12 13 14 15						
29 30														16 17 18 19 20 21 22						
														23 24 25 26 27 28 29						
														30 31						
														19						
December							December							June						
S M T W T F S														S M T W T F S						
1 2 3 4 5							12/21-12/31 Winter Break							6/4 Senior Graduation						
6 7 8 9 10 11 12														6/10 Last Day of Preschool						
13 14 15 16 17 18 19														6/17 End of 4th Qtr (51 Days)						
20 21 22 23 24 25 26														6/17 End of 2nd Semester (95 Days)						
27 28 29 30 31														6/18 Professional Development						
														27 28 29 30						
														13						
Key:																				
( ) Prof. Development - No Students							= # of Student Contact Days							High School Graduation Date: June 4, 2021						
School Closed																				