

The Future of Virtual Academy: *FCSVA*



Objective

To offer virtual learning opportunities
for families during the 2021-2022
school year and beyond





Implementation of Plan

Recognition that in the event that the impact of the virus takes a negative turn, we may have to modify this plan. But a plan is necessary and we want to ensure that what we have in place is based upon lessons learned.

We recognize several key things that must be considered in planning for next year:

- Teachers cannot teach both face-to-face and virtual simultaneously (in the same class period) as a long-term solution. This is more taxing and less effective than doing one or the other.
- We need to have more stringent expectations for virtual participation going forward. The gaps created by COVID-19 cannot be effectively addressed, and will continue to increase if we don't have a solid plan and instructional expectations long term.
- We cannot continue to have flexibility to move between face-to face and virtual. Students will need to be assigned to either the Virtual Academy or face-to-face, and it will need to be a long term commitment. This is essential in order to effectively plan for staffing.



- Review draft options with principals in January 2021
- Provide preliminary plan for review at February 2021 BOE meeting
- Seek board approval on the FCSVA plan at the March 2021 BOE meeting
- Begin advertising plan in March as part of enrollment process
- Deadline for enrollment: **May 15th**
- Review applications and notify families of acceptance by **June 11th**

Timeline for Implementation



Instruction will be provided
within each individual school
through teachers who are part
of the “*FCS Virtual Academy*”
(*FCSVA*)



General Description

Teachers will teach FCSVA from their base schools as the default, with flexibility provided for teachers to teach students from across schools as needed. If schools can provide instruction exclusively within their home schools in the core content areas, this is the first preference. But there will be instances that necessitate teachers instructing students from other schools.

Examples for cross-school teaching would include but are not limited to:

- Low or unmanageable numbers at a particular grade level and school that impact the ability to appropriately distribute students and/or negatively affect class size ratios at K-3
- Electives courses such as enhancements, specialized courses such as CTE, or courses with limited enrollment such as advanced or specialized courses





Application Management

- Management would begin at the school level, with an application process that will take place through the base school with a district-developed and administered survey for interested students who reside within that attendance zone.
- The district would establish an application deadline (tentatively May 15th), a survey for completion by families at each school site, and would advertise this opportunity and the deadlines. Since this will look different from virtual academy this year, a detailed FAQ would be provided to families as part of the decision making process. High schools would have a more narrow course catalog for interested FCSVA, as a number of courses would not be appropriate or feasible in a virtual format. Students who enroll in Franklin County Schools after the May 15th deadline may apply for FCSVA, but consideration and approval of their enrollment in the program will be dependent upon space availability.



- Principals would be asked to review applications beginning May 16th and tentatively assign teachers to provide within their schools. FCSVA allotment meetings with individual principals and, if needed, collectively by grade span to make final determinations of staffing based on interest in FCSVA. In order to staff FCSVA and face-to-face (FtF) on a site based basis, it may require that more self-contained classrooms exist at the elementary level, as it may be more difficult to compartmentalize. Another option would be that teachers may teach some sections virtual, some FtF.
- As part of the application process, a review of student success in virtual academy this year is an important consideration, as we want to ensure that this option is the right fit for students based upon past experience in the virtual environment. This will include a review of the student's record of participation in the 2020-2021 school year to include attendance, academic readiness, and overall performance in a virtual environment. In the event that there are lingering concerns with the virus in the school setting, the criteria for acceptance may include consideration of health concerns





Expectations for Participation

- **Contract Outlining Expectations:** Families (students, parents) would sign a contract for participation in the program. This would include attendance and participation expectations (ex. Higher standard for participation than current virtual academy, engagement in live instruction 5 days per week, cameras on, etc.) . These specific considerations are still being worked through and would be part of the FAQ on the front end of the application process.
- **Exit from Program (School-initiated):** The school will also continue to monitor student progress regardless of enrollment in FtF or FCSVA. Expectations for participation in FCSVA will include regular attendance and successful completion of work. If students are struggling academically, the site-based review team can make a determination to revoke FCSVA enrollment and require that the student return for face-to-face instruction. The district will determine communication expectations so that families are aware of students who are struggling with FCSVA and who are at risk of being reassigned to FtF instruction.



- **Exit from Program (Student-initiated):** In the event that students want to exit the program and return to face-to-face, there would be a site-based review process (district would provide guidelines) and the school would establish a timeline for reentry based upon the fact that the student would have to be reassigned to a non-FCSVA teacher and class size ratios would potentially impact the ability to make this transition midyear. If granted, this would likely take place at the end of a semester. Students who elect to shift back to FtF during the course of a year would not be able to return to virtual for the remainder of that school year. Since our teachers are teaching either FCSVA or FtF, students electing to shift from FCSVA to FtF would be reassigned to a different teacher(s).

Students would have an opportunity to reapply for the following year and would be considered for FCSVA based upon space availability. Families that elect to exit the program and return for FtF will be reviewed in a site-based process that will include consideration of space availability to ensure class size requirements won't be exceeded.



Technology Access:

Students would be provided with a device for use (Chromebook, tablet). Reliable internet accessibility at the student's home will be critical to participation.





Student Management/Accountability

- Students who are enrolled in FCSVA who are assessed will have data that is associated with their base school for accountability purposes.
- Teachers who teach students in FCSVA outside of their home school will have data for those students (regardless of the students' base school) as part of their performance and growth data for accountability purposes.
- Teachers who teach FCSVA at their base school will be evaluated by their home school principal, with some exceptions if a teacher is based at a school but serves the majority of their students from another base school.





Instructional Delivery:

Elementary

Teachers in FCSVA would teach virtual students only. Although the tentative plan is that these teachers would teach only students from their respective schools, there may be instances in which they have to teach students from other school sites as well.

Teachers in the FtF environment would teach their own base school students. This arrangement may require teachers to either teach self-contained, or teach a virtual section(s) in the course of their day.





Instructional Delivery:

Middle

Teachers in FCSVA would either teach virtually or FtF during a given period of time. They may either teach all virtual, all FtF, or separate sections of virtual and face-to-face.

Specialists may teach a section(s) of their course virtually to meet districtwide needs.





Instructional Delivery:

High

Teachers in FCSVA would either teach virtually or FtF during a given period of time. They may either teach all virtual, all FtF, or separate sections of virtual and FtF.

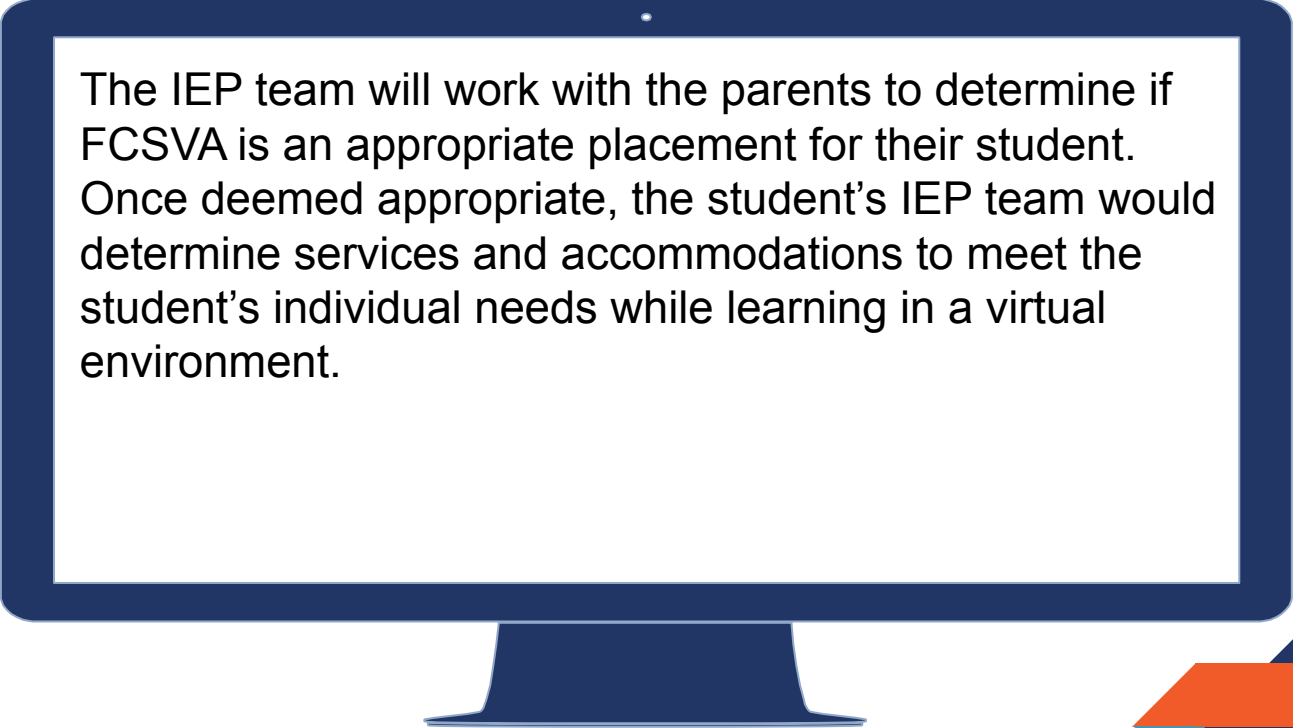
Certain subjects/courses may require teaching of a section(s) of a course virtually to meet districtwide needs.

A narrower course catalog will be required for virtual students, since some courses are not conducive to a virtual environment.





Exceptional Children



The IEP team will work with the parents to determine if FCSVA is an appropriate placement for their student. Once deemed appropriate, the student's IEP team would determine services and accommodations to meet the student's individual needs while learning in a virtual environment.





Benefits

- Remains at base school (students and staff)
- Maintain consistent ADM
- Continuity of support (school knows their own students)
- Participation in extracurriculars easier





Pitfalls/Challenges:

- May have class size issues due to uneven enrollment in virtual vs. FtF. This would have to be mitigated through careful planning and coordination within and outside of school setting.
- In the event that a student is taught by a teacher at a different school, lines of communication need to be clear or this could get confusing.





Final Thoughts

Recognition that in the event that the impact of the virus takes a negative turn, we may have to modify this plan. But a plan is necessary and we want to ensure that what we have in place is based upon lessons learned.

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Thank You!

