The Montpelier Roxbury Public Schools K-8 Virtual Academy
The outline below provides insight into our initial planning to create an online academic experience for our scholars that meets high levels of instruction, supports families and students in their learning experience and offers consistent opportunities for development and design. We learned a great deal from our experiences in the spring and summer to help redefine instruction in a virtual classroom as well as how to work in partnership with families for the best outcomes and experiences. The feedback we received from families, students, and educators was invaluable during our previous remote experiences and drove what you see below. We are committed to providing a thorough and positive virtual learning experience while recognizing that it is not an in person experience in many ways.

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Values
Our virtual learning environment functions based on several shared values expressed by scholars, families, educators and community members gathered through our shared experiences in our initial experiences of online learning and beyond. These values include:

- **Relationships, relationships relationships** - Personal connections and social interactions are prioritized and proactively built into structures to allow for synchronous relationship building opportunities, frequent interactions with building principals and other school adults and peers.
- **Offline and Online Balance** - A healthy combination of online and offline learning and social experiences for our scholars on a daily and weekly basis
- **Aligned with MRPS Curriculum and Learning** - The virtual academy aligns with current in class experiences, instruction, curriculum and learning. This allows educators to continue to collaborate to offer the best instructional experiences for our students whether online or in the classroom as well as ensuring continuity and connections for students when we return to our in-school experience.
- **Balance of Synchronous and Asynchronous Learning** - One of our learning points has been that successful online learning involves a healthy balance of synchronous and asynchronous experiences for students and educators.
- **Formative Assessments** - The experience of online learning looks and feels different for all involved and consistent check ins and multiple avenues to check in on learning, social emotional health and personal connections is key to success. These formative assessments will help inform our instruction to ensure we're reaching every learner and no one is falling "through the cracks" of virtual learning (example: daily check in sheets, reading comprehension forms, etc.).

- **Predictable Schedules** - We learned quickly both as educators and as parents that a predictable schedule is key to establishing healthy learning routines in a home/online learning environment. This includes synchronous (live), asynchronous (recorded), independent work/experiences, small group instruction, breaks and self-driven learning opportunities
- **Organized Experience** - This experience needs to be easy, with consistent access and messaging for families, scholars and educators

Implementation Timeline DRAFT

Major Concepts	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday/Sunday
-Gather Numbers -Assess Capacity -Student Enrollment Process Developed	July 20	July 21	July 22	July 23	July 24	July 25 July 26
-Student Enrollment Process Developed -Program Design/Curriculum and Instruction	July 27	July 28	July 29	July 30	July 31	August 1 August 2
-Program Design/Curriculum and Instruction	August 3	August 4	August 5	August 6	August 7	August 8 August 9
Device Deployment? Parent Information Session(s)	August 10 *Virtual Academy K-4 Device Deployment	August 11 Virtual Academy 5-8 Device Deployment	August 12 Virtual Learning 9-12 Device Deployment	August 13 Parent Information Session	August 14	August 15 August 16
-Student device deployment -Staff Inservice	August 17	August 18	August 19 Virtual Academy Staff Inservice	August 20 Virtual Academy Staff Inservice	August 21 Virtual Academy Staff Inservice	August 22 August 23
-Parent Information Session(s)	August 24 Virtual Academy Staff Inservice	August 25 Virtual Academy Staff Inservice	August 26 Virtual Academy Staff Inservice Parent Conferences	August 27 Virtual Academy Staff Inservice Parent Conferences	August 28 Virtual Academy Staff Inservice	August 29 August 30
	August 31 First Day of School					

Many elements are included within this timeline that include:
- Intentional communication and connection with families
- Parent teacher conference prior to the start of school to discuss goals, experiences, etc. for the upcoming school year

● Parent information sessions and details available for information about virtual academy specifics

SAMPLE Schedules

The following schedules are samples that outline our values such as consistency in schedule, predictability, organized, and appropriate mix of screen time and independent work. Many elements are in the design process and are directly connected to MRPS school (UES, RVS, MSMS and MHS) scheduling. For example, when you see a longer academic block that may be broken into chunks of synchronous (live) whole group instruction, asynchronous (independently accessed) individual learning, and small group or individual synchronous sessions. **Once we have established numbers of students, grade levels and needs outlined these details will come into more focus while continuing to support the core values of high quality instruction.** Sample schedules also mirror (with a few exceptions) the in school structures that are also in planning. Note that blocks include transition times between blocks (in other words not online the entire block for each student).

Kindergarten through Fourth Grade - Value: Predictable Schedule

Time	Content	Values	Pedagogy
7:30-8:00	**Daily Greeting, Check In and Warm Up (Asynchronous)**	Relationships Offline/Online Balance	Engagement Strategies Scaffolds for Learning Use of Virtual Environment Classroom Culture Classroom Routines & Rituals
8:00-8:20	**Morning Meeting (Synchronous)**	Relationships Offline/Online Balance	Engagement Strategies Scaffolds for Learning Use of Virtual Environment Classroom Culture Classroom Routines & Rituals Talk Adjustments
8:20-8:40	**Academic Whole Group (Synchronous)**	Aligned with MRPS Curriculum Formative Assessments Relationships	Engagement Strategies Scaffolds for Learning Use of Virtual Environment Classroom Culture Classroom Routines & Rituals Talk Adjustments Standards Learning Targets/Teaching Points Intellectual Work Curriculum Assessment
8:40-9:10	**Academic Small Group (synchronous)/ Menu (independent)**	Aligned with MRPS Curriculum Formative Assessments Relationships	Engagement Strategies Scaffolds for Learning Use of Virtual Environment Classroom Culture Classroom Routines & Rituals Talk Adjustments

			Standards Learning Targets/Teaching Points Intellectual Work Curriculum Assessment
9:10 - 9:40	**Academic Small Group (synchronous)/ Menu (independent)**	Aligned with MRPS Curriculum Formative Assessments Relationships	Engagement Strategies Scaffolds for Learning Use of Virtual Environment Classroom Culture Classroom Routines & Rituals Talk Adjustments Standards Learning Targets/Teaching Points Intellectual Work Curriculum Assessment
9:40-10:10	**Academic Small Group (synchronous)/ Menu (independent)**	Aligned with MRPS Curriculum Formative Assessments Relationships	Engagement Strategies Scaffolds for Learning Use of Virtual Environment Classroom Culture Classroom Routines & Rituals Talk Adjustments Standards Learning Targets/Teaching Points Intellectual Work Curriculum Assessment
10:10-10:30	**Snack (offline/independent)**		
10:30-10:50	**Academic Whole Group (Synchronous)**	Aligned with MRPS Curriculum Formative Assessments Relationships	Engagement Strategies Scaffolds for Learning Use of Virtual Environment Classroom Culture Classroom Routines & Rituals Talk Adjustments Standards Learning Targets/Teaching Points Intellectual Work Curriculum Assessment
10:50-11:20	**Academic Small Group (synchronous)/ Menu (independent)**	Aligned with MRPS Curriculum Formative Assessments Relationships	Engagement Strategies Scaffolds for Learning Use of Virtual Environment Classroom Culture Classroom Routines & Rituals Talk

			Adjustments Standards Learning Targets/Teaching Points Intellectual Work Curriculum Assessment
11:20-11:50	**Academic Small Group (synchronous)/ Menu (independent)**	Aligned with MRPS Curriculum Formative Assessments Relationships	Engagement Strategies Scaffolds for Learning Use of Virtual Environment Classroom Culture Classroom Routines & Rituals Talk Adjustments Standards Learning Targets/Teaching Points Intellectual Work Curriculum Assessment
11:50-12:50	**Lunch and Recess (offline/independent)**		
12:50-1:20	**Academic Small Group (synchronous)/ Menu (independent)**	Aligned with MRPS Curriculum Formative Assessments Relationships	Engagement Strategies Scaffolds for Learning Use of Virtual Environment Classroom Culture Classroom Routines & Rituals Talk Adjustments Standards Learning Targets/Teaching Points Intellectual Work Curriculum Assessment
1:20-2:00	**Essential Arts Access/Teacher Prep**		Engagement Strategies Scaffolds for Learning Use of Virtual Environment Classroom Culture Classroom Routines & Rituals Talk Adjustments Standards Learning Targets/Teaching Points Intellectual Work Curriculum Assessment
2:00-3:00 Staff PLC/Prep/ Staff Meetings/IEP			

Meetings			

Fifth Grade through Eighth Grade

Time	Content	Values	Pedagogy
7:30-8:00	**Daily Greeting, Check In and Warm Up (Asynchronous)**	Relationships Offline/Online Balance	Engagement Strategies Scaffolds for Learning Use of Virtual Environment Classroom Culture Classroom Routines & Rituals
8:00-8:20	**Teachers Advisory (Synchronous)**	Relationships Offline/Online Balance	Engagement Strategies Scaffolds for Learning Use of Virtual Environment Classroom Culture Classroom Routines & Rituals Talk Adjustments
8:20-9:35 Academic Block 1	Asynchronous/Synchronous	Aligned with MRPS Curriculum Formative Assessments Relationships	Engagement Strategies Scaffolds for Learning Use of Virtual Environment Classroom Culture Classroom Routines & Rituals Talk Adjustments Standards Learning Targets/Teaching Points Intellectual Work Curriculum Assessment
9:40-10:55 Academic Block 2	Asynchronous/Synchronous	Aligned with MRPS Curriculum Formative Assessments Relationships	Engagement Strategies Scaffolds for Learning Use of Virtual Environment Classroom Culture Classroom Routines & Rituals Talk Adjustments Standards Learning Targets/Teaching Points Intellectual Work Curriculum Assessment
11:00-12:00 Lunch/Recess			
12:00-1:15 Academic Block 3	Asynchronous/Synchronous	Aligned with MRPS Curriculum Formative Assessments	Engagement Strategies Scaffolds for Learning

		Relationships	Use of Virtual Environment Classroom Culture Classroom Routines & Rituals Talk Adjustments Standards Learning Targets/Teaching Points Intellectual Work Curriculum Assessment
1:15-2:30 Essential Arts/World Languages	Asynchronous/Synchronous	Aligned with MRPS Curriculum Formative Assessments Relationships	Engagement Strategies Scaffolds for Learning Use of Virtual Environment Classroom Culture Classroom Routines & Rituals Talk Adjustments Standards Learning Targets/Teaching Points Intellectual Work Curriculum Assessment

Learning Partners
Virtual learning is not an equal experience to in person instruction. The Vermont AOE has recommended that primary students pursue in person learning when possible. Due to the differences of virtual learning it is essential that a consistent and clear connection be made between educators and learning partners (i.e. parents, guardians or other identified adult). It is an expectation of this program that there is more than typical explicitly planned communication between the academy and families. There's also an expectation that at least one member of the household will agree to be a designated Learning Partner. This relationship begins with a phone call/video conference with parents to establish connections and learning dynamics. Other topics of discussion during this call include the best time and method of communication, as well as guidance for the parent in lesson access and other important logistic functions.

Elementary Learning Partners can expect to:
- devote about five hours per day overseeing their students' schoolwork ("overseeing" may look different for different learners)
- set the daily schedule with varied activities and breaks
- assist with online school lessons and communicate frequently with the teacher
- help monitor student progress and comprehension

Middle School Learning Partners can expect to:
As students become more independent and responsible in middle school, Learning Partners "step back" a bit, and subject-specific teachers "step in" to provide expert online instruction and off-line support in math, English language arts, science, and social studies.

We recommend that Learning Partners support this transition to more independent learning as they:

- oversee schoolwork for 2 to 3 hours per day
- assist with some lessons
- monitor student comprehension and grades
- refer their student to teachers as needed
- communicate regularly with teachers

Online Training and Support for Learning Partners

Our online orientation program helps the Learning Partner understand how to best support student learning. It also introduces all the resources and support systems made available to help the Learning Partner and student succeed. Quick information and help tips will be located on our virtual academy website. In addition, you'll find support available from your student's teacher, school staff, and other families.

Student Responsibilities

Elementary students get the best start on a bright future as they:

- begin with a fairly consistent schedule
- devote a minimum of 30 hours per week to learning
- perform most of their school work off-line—reading books, writing, and completing assignments
- spend 15–30 percent of each school day working on the computer

Middle School students begin to take more personal responsibility for their online learning as they:

- follow a prescribed schedule, customized to individual student needs
- devote a minimum of 30 hours per week to their studies
- spend 50–75 percent of their online school day on the computer
- blend online and off-line work in their classes

Profile of a Successful Learning Conditions for Scholars

Students who have a successful, satisfying experience learning online tend to share several critical characteristics:

- Good Time Management: The student creates and maintains a consistent study schedule throughout the semester and is able to do so without significant prodding from a teacher.

- **Effective Communication:** The student knows when and how to ask for help and is able to clearly describe any problems she/he is having with the learning materials using email, texting and/or the telephone. This includes seeking help from the online instructor, a mentor, or even other students in the online learning environment.
- **Independent Study Habits:** The student studies and completes assignments without direct supervision and maintains the self-discipline to stick to a schedule.
- **Self-Motivation:** The student has a strong desire to learn skills, acquire knowledge, and fulfill assignments in online classes because of an educational goal and can maintain focus on that goal.
- **Technologically Prepared:** The student knows how to access all the learning tools and resources that they need and have the appropriate hardware and software to be able to do so successfully.

Tips to Consider:

Environment
- Create a learning space - no matter the layout of your home, it's important to set up dedicated school space where distractions can be minimized. It's difficult for many to associate the home environment with academic activity. Think about the noise, distracting technology, non-school related items, etc.
- Designate an area for school supplies and consider ease of reach, ease of access and clearly organized.
- Include educational resources and visuals when possible. Your teachers will help support this as well with resources and guides that can help support your scholar's learning. Think about the resources you might see hanging in a classroom.
- Keep your student in view when possible. This helps with monitoring student engagement and activity during synchronous and asynchronous learning experiences.

Routines and Schedules
- Spend time helping your scholar organize and know the daily routine. Educators will help provide consistent and predictable schedules; however, don't expect students to know these immediately. As you build this routine you'll be able to build your family time around it as well, providing that structure and consistency of a school day.
- The same idea applies to weekly schedules. Things will shift, due dates will come and go, and sometimes in remote learning it's difficult for students to remember details of specific days during the week. Review the schedule often with your student.
- Review the weekly plans and resources provided by the teacher so that you can assist your student should they get stuck or confused at any point. Also, please let your teacher know when this happens. That feedback will help us to continue to improve and refine our methods and practices.

Time Management Techniques
- During in person instruction educators use a wide variety of time management strategies to help students in their learning experiences. Without an educator physically present this can be difficult for some students. Supporting your scholar with organizational skills and time management strategies such as making a list, using a time tracker, setting a timer, taking breaks, etc. can be an extremely important aspect of the learning partners responsibilities.

Connect Often
- MRPS Virtual Academy staff are available to discuss concerns, questions, ideas or celebrations anytime. In a virtual environment it'll be important that our learning community place intentional communication and connection at the forefront of our work.

Technology
All students will be provided with a MRPS Chromebook to use for learning during the year. Expectations of care will be shared with families at deployment (device pickup) which will occur prior to the start of the school year. We have dedicated technology support to help families with all online components we may encounter.

Food Services
Students in the virtual academy may still access food services. Details about this are forthcoming.

Staffing

Michael Berry, MRPS Virtual Academy Principal
Michael has been a member of Montpelier Roxbury Public Schools for three years acting as the Director of Curriculum and Technology. With a combined nine years working as a building principal in Underhill and Richmond, plus district leadership experience, Michael is looking forward to the opportunity to support our MRPS Virtual Academy students, families and educators. He can be reached at michaelberry@mpsvt.org or at (802) 828-7023.

Additional staff will be assigned once we have a sense of numbers, grade levels, content needs, etc. to drive that work.

Glossary of Terms

- **Learning Partner**

- Learning partner is the term many online schools use for the adult primarily responsible for guiding the student through online elementary school. A learning coach is often a parent, but can be any adult willing to take on the role. Learning partners must commit to providing ongoing guidance, supervision and motivation for their student throughout the school year.

- **Synchronous**

- Synchronous learning closely resembles the image we have of traditional classroom learning. It involves a group of students all learning the same thing at the same time. Online tools for synchronous learning include videos, course management systems and web conferences. Synchronous learning can promote a sense of community for online learners.

- **Asynchronous**

- Asynchronous learning refers to student-centered learning that is self-guided and self-paced. It can make use of communication tools, including email, discussion boards, course management systems and even face-to-face interactions between students and teachers. It provides a great deal of flexibility for students.