

# Heartwood Charter School

## Agenda for public hearing for the Heartwood Charter Learning Continuity Plan

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**Thursday, September 24, 2020**

**7:30 PM Public Session**

Call to Order

- I. Introduction
- II. Public Hearing for the Learning Continuity Plan
- III. General Questions
- IV. Adjourn

# Learning Continuity and Attendance Plan (2020–21)

The instructions for completing the Learning Continuity and Attendance Plan is available at <https://www.cde.ca.gov/re/lc/documents/lrngcntntyatndncpln-instructions.docx>.

Local Educational Agency (LEA) Name	Contact Name and Title	Email and Phone
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## General Information

[A description of the impact the COVID-19 pandemic has had on the LEA and its community.]

On Friday, March 13, 2020 Heartwood Charter School announced that it would close its resource centers in both Sonoma and Marin county to address the COVID-19 emergency, as recommended by the respective County health officers. At that time, we anticipated that the resource centers would be closed for four to six weeks, reopening in mid to late April. Due to our status as an Independent Study Charter School, our students, teachers and staff were already giving much of their instruction in a way conducive to supporting students learning independent of a classroom setting. However, as it became apparent that the length of the resource center closures would continue for a significant period of time, potentially until the end of the school year, we reached out to the parents through community Q&A sessions and personal contact between teachers and the families they served to assess how best to further support our independent study students. To supplement the loss of resource center classes and field trips, a more robust online offering was provided by our teachers, in addition to family project-based weekly learning opportunities. Since most of our students already had some form of virtual learning as part of their homeschooling program, we confirmed that sufficient technology supports were available and where applicable provided

technological support. These additional learning supports continued through the last day of school, June 24, 2020.

Recognizing that the COVID-19 emergency and the resulting economic disruption was very stressful for families, our employees adapted academic workload, delivery method, and work completion methods during this period. In addition, teachers stayed in regular contact with families through phone, online platforms, and email. We shared social-emotional support resources via our websites and social media.

As a community based school, we had planned end of year celebrations at both our resource center sites. These celebrations give students the chance to share their work with others and come together as a community to socialize. Employees, students and families expressed concern over the lack of emotional closure to the school year. Staff worked hard to give students and parents celebrations via videoconferencing and acknowledge in some tangible way the entrance into summer.

We have spent the summer preparing to continue to support students through virtual support of their independent study programs, creating more teacher led online classes and one-on-one virtual tutoring sessions. In hopes that we will be able to open our resource centers sometime this year for limited classes, we have prepared plans for outdoor in-person instruction. We stayed in contact with our community throughout the summer updating them on developments at the state and local level and preparing them for what to anticipate in the fall.

The single greatest impact upon our community as a result of the Covid 19 crisis has been the legislation passed at the state level. The passage of SB 98 and the subsequent failure to amend this bill to allow IS charters to grow has absolutely devastated our community, both in terms of morale and in fiscal terms. As a charter successfully finishing its first year of operations, we experienced significant growth in the early spring. The combination of early P2 reporting combined with the growth cap has created a scenario where we are being given funds to serve 120 students even though we finished the year with closer to 180 students. Everyone has had to make sacrifices simply to continue to serve the students that were part of our community at the end of last year. Our parents, teachers and staff are committed to making our beautiful school community thrive, but the state has made what is already a challenging time significantly more difficult.

## **Stakeholder Engagement**

[A description of the efforts made to solicit stakeholder feedback.]

Heartwood used a variety of platforms for communication over the spring/summer and will continue to do so throughout the 2020-21 school year. These platforms include school Facebook page, school website, emails, Zoom meetings, and electronic/paper surveys and forms.

In regards to soliciting stakeholder feedback, we surveyed our families and employees throughout the spring and summer to determine how they felt about reopening school in August. As part of our surveys we asked if families had experienced economic hardship directly related to the pandemic such as the loss of income, a change in living situation, or other hardship to better enable us to identify students who might need additional support due to changed circumstances.

In mid-April when it became evident that the closure of the resource centers would be of greater length, we convened multiple committees to assess different aspects of what it would take to safely re-open the resource centers. Each committee had teacher and staff involvement, with board and parent members on many of the committees. Our reopening committees and board defined several plans and sought feedback from the community on these plans, via Q&A Zoom meetings and a detailed survey.

In July, we began working on implementing the necessary changes that would need to be made at our resource center in Marin, with feedback and support from the Girl Scouts, from whom we lease the site.

Beginning in mid July we held employee information and input sessions via Zoom and worked closely with our employees to focus on the development of learning plans and protocols to support our independent study students in the best way possible.

In August, we made the choice to delay the start of our school year to allow more time for a possible legislative solution to the restrictions imposed by the passage of SB 98. We used this additional time for planning and implementation of new policies and protocols. We also took this time to adjust to the new budget necessitated by the passing of SB 98. We continued to seek out parent feedback by way of surveys and open forums via Zoom meetings.

In August, we again asked for employee and parent input to ensure that our Learning Continuity and Attendance Plan meets the needs of our community. We hosted a general employee input session.

[A description of the options provided for remote participation in public meetings and public hearings.]

We invited employees, parents, and community to specially created meetings and Q&A sessions via the Zoom video conferencing platform. The meeting links and joining instructions were emailed out to interested parties. Email reminders of events were sent at a minimum of twice a week for the two weeks leading up to the meetings.

[A summary of the feedback provided by specific stakeholder groups.]

Feedback from employees included that they felt communication about the reopening of school, protocols and procedures, and support for teachers regarding instruction were areas of strength. Technology support and issues for parents and students were noted to be of concern. Teacher and student mental health were also listed as concerns.

The parents were concerned about the impacts of SB 98 and were troubled by the general sense that the state is not sufficiently supporting home school students. They were supportive and thankful of the general staff of the school and the efforts of both staff and teachers to make this year more engaging and robust than the spring. They looked forward to the time when the resource centers can be reopened and can provide some in-person learning and social experiences.

Combining results from multiple surveys we have collected over 120 responses which is almost 70% of our population. Families are appreciative of the work we are doing and the frequent communication and updates. Most families have expressed concerns about the increased engagement with technology on the part of their students and lack of social interaction.

[A description of the aspects of the Learning Continuity and Attendance Plan that were influenced by specific stakeholder input.]

Additional support for parents (technology and instructional) were included in the Learning Continuity and Attendance Plan based on parent feedback. With minimal funding, we have sought donations to increase the available technology for employees and students. Also, Heartwood made adjustments to schedules and assignments, and we will be working to build a mental health team to provide additional services and resources based on the input we received.

## **Continuity of Learning**

## In-Person Instructional Offerings

[A description of the actions the LEA will take to offer classroom-based instruction whenever possible, particularly for students who have experienced significant learning loss due to school closures in the 2019–2020 school year or are at a greater risk of experiencing learning loss due to future school closures.]

As an independent study charter school we are not required to provide in-person instruction. However, to the extent allowed by state and local public health orders/guidelines, Heartwood will offer in-person learning opportunities at our resource centers in Sonoma and Marin counties for our independent study students. This will include outdoor in-person instruction with appropriate safety measures, and outdoor in-person teacher meetings with students and parents.

While our resource centers remain closed, if allowable by state and local public health guidelines, Heartwood will conduct English proficiency and special education assessments in a one-to-one setting, with appropriate safety precautions in place. Similarly, if allowed, students who have experienced (or are at greater risk of experiencing) learning loss may be grouped into small groups to receive in-person instruction. For example, students with moderate to severe disabilities, English learners who are new to US schools, or foster/homeless youth may receive in-person instruction over the course of an instructional week.

In preparation for students' return to the resource centers, we have made significant efforts to ensure a safe and clean environment, including thorough cleaning and disinfecting of all learning spaces, workspaces, and common areas over the summer; ordering adequate personal protective equipment (PPE), hygiene and cleaning supplies; procedures for health screenings, and increased cleaning schedules when students are present. While at present we are anticipating to only have outdoor instruction, when and if indoor instruction is provided, Heartwood will maximize available learning spaces for physical distancing through measuring and reconfiguring room set-ups and removing non-essential furniture.

### **Actions Related to In-Person Instructional Offerings [additional rows and actions may be added as necessary]**

Description	Total Funds	Contributing
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Additional cleaning, such as disinfecting wipes and sprays, PPE, small cohorts, little to no mixing of cohorts, cohorts assigned to designated areas to limit intermixing, hand sanitizing and hand washing at specific points in the day, physical distancing in rooms, remove extraneous furniture from classrooms and store, additional hand washing stations built around the resource center site (Marin)	\$3500	Y
Any additional supply costs (pencils, books, notebooks, etc) for in person instruction	\$1200	Y

## Distance Learning Program

### Continuity of Instruction

[A description of how the LEA will provide continuity of instruction during the school year to ensure pupils have access to a full curriculum of substantially similar quality regardless of the method of delivery, including the LEA’s plan for curriculum and instructional resources that will ensure instructional continuity for pupils if a transition between in-person instruction and distance learning is necessary.]

As an independent study charter the majority of our population has had a virtually unbroken continuity of instruction, regardless of the quarantine status. But that does not mean they have not been affected by Covid 19.

Teacher teams continue to evaluate the standards to determine the most essential concepts for instruction to ensure that student activities and study is focused and provides clear evidence of student learning. Parents have the freedom to choose teacher approved curriculum to support their learning goals and educational philosophy. Teachers have stayed in active contact with the families they support to ensure learning continuity, regardless of the individual curriculum choices for each family. Teachers have collaborated to provide consistency between grades and the evaluation of work samples and support of curriculum over the arc of the upcoming year. Communication with families will occur throughout the year via video conferencing (Zoom, Google Meet), telephone, and email.

### Access to Devices and Connectivity

[A description of how the LEA will ensure access to devices and connectivity for all pupils to support distance learning.]

During the summer of 2020, the school surveyed parents to determine technology needs including devices and hotspots for internet access. Based on survey information we distributed school-owned devices to students in need prior to the beginning of the school year, in accordance with our school technology policy. At this point, we do not have any families that are still in need of additional devices or connectivity. Given the budget consequences of SB 98 on independent study charters, we are looking to grants and donations to help provide additional technological needs, should they arise during the course of the school year. The school will continue to provide responsive technology support for parents and teachers with operational questions through our skilled support staff.

## **Pupil Participation and Progress**

[A description of how the LEA will assess pupil progress through live contacts and synchronous instructional minutes, and a description of how the LEA will measure participation and time value of pupil work.]

We will continue to track student participation and attendance as we have in past years, according to the requirements for independent study charters. Our teaching teams gather each learning period to assess work samples of student work and evaluate them for quality, assessing if they are grade appropriate and meet the required state standards. Our Credentialed Support Teachers (CSTs) work closely with the families and students they serve to ensure that the student is actively participating on a daily basis in educational activities that meet the state standards.

## **Distance Learning Professional Development**

[A description of the professional development and resources that will be provided to staff to support the distance learning program, including technological support.]

Professional Development resources were designed to promote teacher/staff “voice and choice” and self-paced learning. This included using the G-Suite for Education to house resources for technology tools, pedagogy, social-emotional learning and mental health. We encouraged research and signing up for classes offered through platforms such as SeeSaw, Zoom, PearDeck, Loom, Google Classroom, and others. Weekly staff meetings provide time to share what’s working well, and PD will be offered throughout the school year. The school provides technology support for teachers and paid for all teachers to become a Google Certified Educator level 1.

## **Staff Roles and Responsibilities**

[A description of the new roles and responsibilities of affected staff as a result of COVID-19.]

Classified staff have assumed new roles providing additional tech support to students, parents and teachers as well as providing increased engagement for students with special needs.

One of our credentialed support teachers will be assuming an administrative support role after we were unable to assign him sufficient students following the passage of SB 98 and the severe limits it placed on our growth.

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, school leadership and staff have spent considerable hours planning, communicating and implementing procedures and protocols that emphasize employee and student health and safety. The director maintained regular communication with employees and the community through email and social media platforms and worked collaboratively with teachers and staff. The director and staff worked to create additional support and learning loss mitigation plans for our students, both virtually and at our resource centers when they are able to open. Our staff fully understands the importance of making personal contacts with students and families, particularly those who are under-resourced, in order to identify any need to be re-engaged with school.

## **Supports for Pupils with Unique Needs**

[A description of the additional supports the LEA will provide during distance learning to assist pupils with unique needs, including English learners, pupils with exceptional needs served across the full continuum of placements, pupils in foster care, and pupils who are experiencing homelessness.]

Teachers and support staff have had regular contact with Pupils with Unique Needs and their families during the closures of the resource centers to ensure that they have access to learning resources and that they understand the information being communicated by Heartwood. Spanish translations of all communication are provided upon request. While we currently have no EL students, our EL Coordinator is prepared to collaborate with teachers to support incoming EL students through preparation of materials and additional student contact via video, phone, and teleconferencing. The EL Coordinator will work closely with EL families, making sure they can access necessary materials and any technological platforms. Our EL coordinator is committed to

providing support to both students, teachers, and families as needed. We will provide native language support as needed.

As mentioned above, during the period that our resource centers remain closed and as allowable by state and local public health guidelines, Heartwood will conduct English proficiency and special education assessments in a one-to-one setting, with appropriate safety precautions in place. Similarly, if allowed, students who have experienced (or are at greater risk of experiencing) learning loss may be grouped into small groups to receive in-person instruction. For example, students with moderate to severe disabilities, English learners who are new to US schools, or foster/homeless youth may receive in-person instruction over the course of the week.

For our low income students, we have provided additional support with internet access and devices and more frequent contact for those families with limited resources.

### **Actions Related to the Distance Learning Program [additional rows and actions may be added as necessary]**

Description	Total Funds	Contributing
Technology: Chromebooks/cases/hotspots, software	\$4,000	Y

### **Pupil Learning Loss**

[A description of how the LEA will address pupil learning loss that results from COVID-19 during the 2019–2020 and 2020–21 school years, including how the LEA will assess pupils to measure learning status, particularly in the areas of English language arts, English language development, and mathematics.]

Heartwood already has Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) processes in place to support students who suffer from learning loss for a variety of reasons. Recognizing that learning loss throughout the COVID-19 pandemic could be much more widespread than in previous years, MTSS teams will closely examine data from assessments to provide additional support and intervention. Intervention programs may include virtual intervention sessions with certificated teachers, push-in support from aides, and one-on-one tutoring. Teachers will conduct office hours so that they are available for questions, tutoring, or reteaching for all students who need additional support.

If CAASPP standardized testing is conducted in the 2020-21 school year, those scores will also be used to measure possible learning loss and identify students for possible intervention and support in the 2021-22 school year.

## **Pupil Learning Loss Strategies**

[A description of the actions and strategies the LEA will use to address learning loss and accelerate learning progress for pupils, as needed, including how these strategies differ for pupils who are English learners; low-income; foster youth; pupils with exceptional needs; and pupils experiencing homelessness.]

In addition to the above strategies that will be available to all students, additional English Language Development (ELD) support will be provided by our EL Coordinator. Staff will maintain connections with the families of students who are low-income, foster and homeless youth via telephone, electronically, and/or home visits to ascertain if they need additional resources in order to fully access the curriculum and instruction.

With support and guidance from our authorizing district and the Sonoma County SELPA our special education team will hold a virtual (video or tele-conference) IEP meeting for each student who receives special education services, working with parents and providers to ensure that students received appropriate services and accommodations throughout the period during which the resource centers are closed and in-person meetings are not possible. Initial, annual, triennial, and transition IEPs will be held within the legal timelines. School staff will conduct similar meetings for students receiving accommodations through 504 plans.

## **Effectiveness of Implemented Pupil Learning Loss Strategies**

[A description of how the effectiveness of the services or supports provided to address learning loss will be measured.]

Services and supports will be measured in an ongoing manner through formative and summative assessments, including teacher-created assessments, publisher assessments, ELPAC scores, and CAASPP scores if available. Additionally, student work completion, student grades, and student attendance will be monitored.

**Actions to Address Pupil Learning Loss [additional rows and actions may be added as necessary]**

Description	Total Funds	Contributing
Small group instruction by the teacher, small group intervention by the teacher,	\$50,000	Y
Professional development hours by teachers to learn new platforms for instruction	\$1,000	Y

## Mental Health and Social and Emotional Well-Being

[A description of how the LEA will monitor and support mental health and social and emotional well-being of pupils and staff during the school year, including the professional development and resources that will be provided to pupils and staff to address trauma and other impacts of COVID-19 on the school community.]

Heartwood Charter has been able to access local and regional mental health resources. We have curated resources for parents and for teachers and we provided regular updates for staff and the community over the summer.

During the new school year, Heartwood will continue to utilize counselors, clinicians, and outside partners to provide support for our students, families and staff. We will use our Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) process to identify students who might need additional help and then connect them to the right resources. Additionally, teachers were provided with a curated list of SEL and mental health resources for instructional use and we continue to work with SCOE and our SELPA on support materials appropriate for all grade ranges.

## Pupil and Family Engagement and Outreach

[A description of pupil engagement and outreach, including the procedures for tiered reengagement strategies for pupils who are absent from distance learning and how the

LEA will provide outreach to pupils and their parents or guardians, including in languages other than English, when pupils are not meeting compulsory education requirements, or if the LEA determines the pupil is not engaging in instruction and is at risk of learning loss.]

Heartwood Charter has developed several different strategies to track engagement, student participation and increased community:

- Verification of current contact information for each enrolled student
- Streamlined digital attendance logs
- Outreach to determine pupil needs including connection with health and/or mental health services if necessary
- Developing and implementing learning contracts for each student with parent/guardian acknowledgement
- Subject specific personalized tutoring for students
- Providing more diversified online courses

## School Nutrition

[A description of how the LEA will provide nutritionally adequate meals for all pupils, including those students who are eligible for free or reduced-price meals, when pupils are participating in both in-person instruction and distance learning, as applicable.]

As an independent study charter, our students are primarily learning outside of a classroom environment and so therefore are not provided with meals. However, at those times when eligible students are at the resource center, or any other satellite facility operated by Heartwood charter school, for a period of two hours or longer, Heartwood will provide eligible students with a nutritionally adequate free or reduced-price meal.

## Additional Actions to Implement the Learning Continuity Plan [additional rows and actions may be added as necessary]

Section	Description	Total Funds	Contributing
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N/A	Administrator and staff planning throughout the Spring and Summer 2020 to develop multiple plans for reopening resource centers and prepare for the implementation of a more robust virtual classes schedule to support independent study students learning, as well as to improve virtual teacher - student contact throughout the year.	\$18,700	Y
Mental Health	Counseling and related services for students and families in need provided via on-line counseling services.	\$20,000	Y

## Increased or Improved Services for Foster Youth, English Learners, and Low-Income Students

Percentage to Increase or Improve Services	Increased Apportionment Based on the Enrollment of Foster Youth, English Learners, and Low-Income students
3.84%	\$39,953

[For the actions being provided to an entire school, or across the entire school district or county office of education (COE), an explanation of (1) how the needs of foster youth, English learners, and low-income students were considered first, and (2) how these actions are effective in meeting the needs of these students.]

As an increased service, we created a partnership with a vendor to provide technology for students, prioritizing low-income, EL and foster youth. One challenge as part of this process has been access to funding due to SB 98 and our status as an IS charter to accommodate the increased needs for technology. On hand technology was prioritized and loaned to families who have limited or no access to technology..

Further, faculty will place priority on engagement and performance monitoring of EL, foster, and low-income students, to ensure this population has access to connectivity and appropriate work space.

Another increased service is remote counseling support via an online vendor, with priority given to low-income, EL and foster youth.

[A description of how services for foster youth, English learners, and low-income students are being increased or improved by the percentage required.]

Heartwood Charter school is spending \$42,433 on increased or improved services for foster youth, English learners, and low-income students, 3.95% of the total expenditures.