

Good morning and thank you for joining us for a live information session on the CCISD virtual learning program. I'm Elaina Polsen, chief communications officer for the Clear Creek Independent School District. And I'm joined this morning by Dr. Robert Bayard who is our deputy superintendent for curriculum and instruction.

As many of you know, Clear Creek ISD is currently taking applications for an online learning environment for students in kindergarten through sixth grade as those students in that age group are not eligible for a COVID 19 vaccine yet.

2:11

Here's what we're going to cover today. We'll go over our plans as they stand today for CCISD, virtual learning what parents and students can expect in an online learning environment. What this program is and what it is not. And then we'll answer your questions.

2:35

We are happy that the Board of Trustees on Monday evening approved the virtual learning program pending passage of legislation, Senate Bill 15, as presented by our Senator, Larry Taylor. Last spring, CCISD advocated for legislative approval for funding for virtual schools. The legislature did not pass or approve such funding. We are fortunate that at least, although it's quite late into the second special legislative session, it is being considered through a Senate Bill 15.

3:22

The **CCISD virtual learning proposal is contingent on state funding**. And I want to note, it is a temporary response, a temporary health mitigation response to provide learning opportunities for students. This program is designed for students in grades kindergarten through sixth grade. You might ask why not pre-K. **Pre-kindergarten is not part of Senate Bill 15**. This virtual school is predominately CCISD curriculum provided by CCISD. Teachers will provide synchronous and asynchronous learning with CCISD content certified teachers and specialized services will be available for virtual and on campus, not at home.

4:11

I do want to emphasize **this program is much different from Clear Connections**. It is not Clear Connections from last year through Clear Connections. We really try to provide an opportunity for all students to meet all needs and all programs. And with the timing that this legislative proposal has been presented, along with the opportunities that we were able to provide with existing staff. We are providing this for kindergarten through sixth grade. We will attempt to staff this by using current staff members, re-assigning staff from lower enrollment grade levels in classrooms. We'll try to use unassigned FTE's as possible. That's a full-time employees. And if necessary, we will hire additional teachers and try to fund those through ESSR funds, which are federal dollars that we are receiving from the state.

5:05

I do want to mention some important awareness about the impact on this virtual program as such and the timing in which this legislative proposal is going through the legislature right now. **Some brick-and-mortar teachers will certainly have different class rosters.** That means brick and mortar students, students who remain in brick and mortar, will have different teachers. Some brick-and-mortar teachers will be teaching virtual courses and or different grade levels than what they have right now. Most students, of course, who choose CCISD virtual learning will have different teachers. We are prepared to meet these needs, though, and to adjust as quickly as possible. We know how important it is for students to build a relationship with their teachers.

5:52

**Art and P.E.** will be taught through asynchronous instruction. A sixth grader who's in in the virtual learning program will be taught mathematics and English language arts. We will also offer honors courses for those students if chosen. Social studies and science may be taught through asynchronous instruction. For all students in grades, kindergarten through sixth grade, they will take a fine arts elective and a P.E. elective. Those electives are predefined as art and personal fitness. For virtual learning, Students will need to maintain 90 percent attendance, successfully complete assignments, and maintain active participation for continued enrollment in the virtual learning program. We want our students to be successful, and the way they can be the most successful is by being engaged in their classes and participating and at least attempting their assignments.

6:53

**Dual language** programs will only be one way based on the enrollment. We will look at which students have been in a two-way program, and we can make a determination upon all the enrollments that that we receive. But as of right now, dual language programs will be one way.

7:11

This is a fast turnaround. We know how important it is to get students started. And so we **aim to begin asynchronous instruction on Tuesday, September 7, to allow our teachers to prepare lessons and adjust for the first day of synchronous instruction on Wednesday, September 8.** I'd like to take you through the next steps of where we are yesterday. On August 24, we launched the student application. We know this is a tough decision to make. But the sooner you can enroll your children, the sooner we can plan for their classes and start making adjustments to their teachers. The following week, **August 30 through September 3, that's when our department curriculum instruction and Human Resource Department will work frantically to staff and schedule** not only this virtual program, but also make the adjustments needed for classroom learning and brick and mortar and will launch with asynchronous learning on September 7, Tuesday, right after Labor Day.

8:29

I do want to point out that there is an additional opportunity for students who are out temporarily. This is not the same as the virtual program, but we will be **offering remote conferencing. It is not virtual learning, but it is remote conferencing as defined by the state. And that is for pre-K through 12.** It is temporary, up to 20 days. There will be a mix of synchronous and asynchronous instruction. It's not virtual learning. It is remote conferencing because the instruction is limited. And so if a student is out with COVID or presents symptoms and they are at home, then those classes might be fluid every day in

terms of the numbers of students in which students participate in those classes. As such, **no grades will be taken through remote conferencing**. It cannot be personalized because of the kids coming in and out of that, and it won't be taught by the student's teacher. However, instruction is aligned and will be aligned to the CCISD scope and sequence. I can also say that in this remote conferencing, we will do our best to help students. But it is very important for students to remain connected to their teachers and their classes through itslearning and see-saw based on their grade level in classes that they're taking.

9:46

I'd like to just take a moment to for those that have been following our virtual learning journey since last year, it has taken some turns and different pathways that were completely out of our local control. When we had Clear Connections last year, the state had provided funding for what we call remote attendance. The school district was receiving daily attendance for students that were unclear connections. That funding and that opportunity ended at the end of the school year. And it was up to the legislators, the legislative session, to pass a bill that would allow for remote attendance. And as we know, the legislative session ended abruptly. **And the bill was in its final stages of passage, and it didn't make it across the finish line**. So we had been planning and anticipating a Clear Connections version of it this year. But when that bill did not make it through the legislative session at the end of May, we had to table those plans, essentially. And as the delta variant has presented itself a challenge for school districts across Texas and the nation. Our district, along with many others, have been strongly advocating for the re-implementation of this of this bill. And Senator Taylor, who is our local lawmaker, has reintroduced Senate Bill 15 to the session in the special session. And by all indicators, we really have high hopes that this bill will see it through the finish line. So, **we're moving forward under the assumption that this bill is going to make it through the legislative process**. In the event that it does not, we might end up having a different conversation, but we really don't anticipate that being a challenge this time around.

11:38

And because of that, we're having to staff virtual classrooms two weeks into a school year where class rosters, class lists, students are making connections with their brick-and-mortar teachers. And so, we do ask for your patience and your understanding, even for those that are not participating in the virtual learning program, because it may impact classes at the elementary level. But we'll know more once people finish their applications and we have a sense of what impact it may have campus to campus.

12:09

You know, I've read a lot of comments about why didn't we prepare for this sooner? Not only did the legislative bill not pass the first session, we were enjoying June and July just as much as everyone else without our masks and enjoying life, thinking that we had made it through this this terrible time. And the delta variant really caught up with us at the end of July and August. And so we're at least thankful that Senator Taylor has brought forward Senate Bill 15 as a possibility. We are hoping that it passes and we're hopeful that that it will pass. Well, currently, **we have approximately three hundred students that have already put their name in for the virtual learning program**. And this is and we're not even 24 hours into our enrollment period. And we do understand that whether these are families that participated in Clear Connections last year or their dynamics of their family situation have changed this year, that we want to provide this opportunity. **And we are asking for families to commit for the**

**semester to allow for continuity and teaching and learning online and in brick and mortar.** As we know, for those families that participated last year in clear connections every nine weeks, classes were being collapsed because more and more students were feeling more comfortable going into brick and mortar. So it is important that we have some stability, at least for one semester, to keep students in the virtual learning program. So, to take that under consideration.

13:41

**When will parents be notified as far as that they're in so they can move forward with a virtual learning option?** Our team will be working as quickly as possible even this week. We're working hard based on the numbers that are coming in to begin outlining possible schedules. Parents will be notified as early as next week. Parents who sign their children up will be part of this virtual learning program. But as far as their class setup and placement, we're hoping to aim by Friday, September 3, and it might be the fourth.

14:21

**Can you share what a day in the life of a virtual learner would look like at the elementary level?** Our elementary students will try to mimic like what they have in school. There will be blocks of time for mathematics, English language arts. The day will start off for the morning meeting to engage students and help them with their social, emotional well-being and core values. Then throughout the week, we'll be opportunities in blocks of time for science, social studies, as well as art and P.E. For a sixth-grade student, they will follow a bell schedule, a period-by-period schedule in which they have their core classes, as well as art and P.E. English language arts will be double blocked for many students and for students who are in the gifted and talented program. There will be opportunities to have G.T. services through their core classes.

15:21

**And then you mentioned this earlier, but when will parents be notified of their child's new schedule and teacher?** Yes, we are aiming for Friday, September 3, about the child's new schedule and new teacher.

15:36

**If students want to leave the program before the semester ends, what can they do?** We really need a commitment from all parents who sign up their children for this virtual school, that they will be in the program for the semester. It is very difficult to change schedules and to move kids in and out of brick and mortar, because that could increase class sizes even more and really create hardships on those class schedules.

16:05

**There's a question about attendance zone and enrollment.** And I do want to just take a moment to explain if you are currently enrolled in CCISD. You log into skyward family access like you normally would do to check your child's grades, complete the back-to-school forms, and you'll see a tab on the left-hand side that says online forms. And just click on that. You just proceed through the process. And that's really as simple as that. If you are a family who has withdrawn prior to the start of the school year, so you're no longer technically enrolled in the district, but you reside in our district boundaries, you do need to go through our new student enrollment process. And that is on our website as well. It should

tell you how to get there from that. And you do need to prove residency back in the district is just no different than if a new family enrolled in CCISD just to validate that that information. And **you do have to reside in our school district boundaries to attend the virtual learning program.** We are not an open enrollment school district. And that applies for the virtual learning program, too. This is a virtual program. The bill is still being developed. And so as of right now, the direction is that it will have its own campus number. They'll be part of the virtual learning program as its own campus. However, we have been made aware that Senator Taylor is working with other legislatures, legislators, to possibly make it more of a programmatic type of school and will adapt and adjust as the bill gets passed, hopefully.

17:56

And, you know, it's the Senate Bill 15 as well as our legislative efforts. We had found great success in Clear Connections last year of students that we've had the opportunity to meet with really thrived in an online environment. It's not for everybody. And we do prefer, especially for elementary brick and mortar in-person learning, but for students that find this to be a great option for them. We do see a vision of online learning. This particular legislation does carve that pathway moving forward, not just for a COVID-19 response. So, we're not there yet. We're just really wanting to provide appropriate, robust learning for students who are home due to COVID-19 through a minimum of this semester.

18:39

We do want to continue our work throughout the year to build a long-term virtual program for students. We had many students across the district who did thrive through virtual learning. And it was such a such a great thing to hear, especially from parents for kids who have had a tough time connecting in their classrooms. And sometimes some kids were home and they connected for the first time ever with with their peers through this virtual program. It is not for everyone. And so that's why we will be looking at those continuation criteria of that 90 percent attendance and active participation in class and completion of assignments.

19:20

**And there's also in-person services that would be available, too.** So, this isn't you do you learn from home and you can't come on to the campus to receive certain services. So that is still an option for families. It is still an option. Those services are afterschool for the limited numbers of clubs. There aren't any athletic events or choir events. For example, those students will be home during the day. This bill, as it's written, will require students to come to the school for state testing and will adjust as we get to that and when we see the final bill. But we'll make arrangements to make sure that any parents who keep their students home and participate in this virtual program will keep them separated from the student body as much as possible for forward state testing when that is required.

20:12

**A question about what the process will look like to go back to brick and mortar once students in 12 and under are eligible to receive a COVID 19 vaccine. And will families be able to move back and forth between virtual and brick and mortar?** I think we talked about it. It's useful to reinforce that. We do anticipate vaccinations being available later this fall. And so that will take time for parents to make that choice and to follow through with their physician to receive vaccination. So we are planning for a semester at the minimum of this for virtual learning. So that will get us through the holiday season. We

want our students to return. We know the best form of instruction for most students is in-person. Again, this is provided as a temporary solution and a mitigation strategy, frankly, for this pandemic. We will make it as seamless as possible for parents to bring their kids back to brick and mortar in the spring semester if that opportunity arises. And we're hoping that this wave does come down so that that makes it even more possible. And we want students to be academically successful, so if they enter into the virtual learning program and after a short period time or even a month or so, if they're not successful, then certainly we will work with families to transition them back into brick and mortar setting.

21:36

**How has preparation for virtual school been possible? When we just found out about this option, will teachers be prepared?** Fortunately, we've been through this rodeo. It has not been fun or easy, but we will do what it takes for our students. And this is this is something that that we feel is important. And so we are making adjustments. We've had planning sessions all week. So far, we had preplanning sessions last week as soon as we found out about Senate Bill 15. And part of the training will be for teachers who have not taught virtually. They'll go through professional learning activities for how best to engage students. But majority of our teachers had plenty of practice last year. So, we're used to this and we're willing to jump back in to help all kids who sign up for this virtual program.

22:28

**Explain the difference between virtual learning and remote conferencing.** Virtual learning is when a student actually takes classes and they have a teacher that they visit with and that they receive instruction from every day and each week that they're in this program, they receive the same classes that they would have had in brick and mortar. Remote conferencing is really just that. It's more of a tutoring type of environment without the formal teaching and learning or that instruction. It is what the state defines it. It's conferencing. And so, for elementary students, it's they're required to be in this synchronous instruction for about two hours and for our sixth graders, secondary students, six through 12 for four hours. And because the law is, as stated for remote conferencing, doesn't allow a teacher to teach both brick and mortar students and all nine students at the same time, it will make it virtually impossible for a student to visit or have that remote conferencing time with their classroom teachers. And so we'll have staff members throughout the district that will provide instructional services aligned with the scope and sequence and be there to guide students as best as possible through their work.

25:55

**Would it be fair to say that if parents are making a decision today or through this week, that they really should be choosing between a brick and mortar setting and a virtual learning program?** You shouldn't be deciding between a virtual learning program and remote conferencing. Remote conferencing is very temporary. It's really what we're looking at it being is that if your child is home for a temporary medical condition, that they can continue receiving instructional support versus asynchronously through its learning. So, for example, if a student is in quarantine currently with COVID 19 and potentially facing 10 days of exclusion from a classroom setting, they can go into the remote conferencing framework and receive instruction. We want students who are in this remote conferencing to be connected to their classroom teacher through its learning and see-saw so that they're still with their teacher and able to submit assignments. But they're not seeing their regular teacher every day or

on teams with virtual learning. They will have a teacher, their own teachers throughout the day and throughout the week that they will see every week.

25:14

**Will GT special programming be offered in virtual learning program.** Yes, we will provide services through honors classes, 6th grade, but we can't be a program to serve all populations and all needs. And so, there's not a separate alpha and wave program, although we'll have opportunities for Alpha to meet at the end of the day. GT services at the end of the day, as best as possible

25:48

**For those that may have not been part of our online learning last year, how much Synchronous time during the elementary school day, for example, that parents could anticipate?** During the elementary school days, synchronous time is about 90-minute block, a 90-minute block time for. There's about an hour block time for mathematics and then another hour to two hours for between science, art and the morning meeting. So, our elementary students can anticipate spending at least four hours of Synchronoss. It won't necessarily be all at one chunked four-hour time. That's a difficult task to do for a kindergartner or even a fifth. Greater to be on for four hours straight. But they'll be Synchronous opportunities and asynchronous opportunities.

26:48

I'd like to talk about those asynchronous opportunities and what we need from parents. And that is we'd like for our parents to be learning coaches. So, during those asynchronous opportunities, that's when students are doing work on their own. They might be creating a project, some type of extension work or intervention. And we just need a parent to sit with the child to make sure that they're actively engaged in that work of a learning coach is also there to help a child log in, get into that into teams and help a student navigate between Microsoft teams, itslearning, See-Saw and the other tools that are provided by the teacher.

27:24

And so we know in the virtual learning program with students having a dedicated teacher, there's no question that the teacher will be able to be monitoring the student's progress, what they're working on, grading assignments. Would that be the same in a remote conferencing environment? So, I'd like to just kind of show what remote conferencing will be. If I enter remote conferencing, if I have been exposed to Covid and I present symptoms and now I'm quarantining at home, I might be able to enter remote conferencing tomorrow in which there might be other students who have been in there for already three days. But then on Thursday, you have three more students that pop in and two kids might exit. And so for the teachers who are leading that remote conferencing, it's different kids moving in and out of that of that that that period, they're there can't be any grades taken. The grades are not aligned to the teachers. They don't have teachers' grade books. It's really just there to conference with a student and provide tutoring and guidance to help a student with their work, which was actually a big request last year from families of making sure we heard that from high school students, especially to not have them fall behind due to having to quarantine. And the remote conferencing will be available for students in all grade levels.

28:53

**Do families contact the campus if this option is needed?** So, what will happen in that is that we don't have that process, I don't think ironed out quite yet, but we don't have that process. I can tell you what we anticipate, and that is when a letter goes home to a parents about them possibly in quarantine, or if a parent has informed us that they're keeping their child at home to be quarantined. We will give them links. And so there will be a link for reading, another link for math, a link for science, et cetera. And your children can log in during those times to have access to a teacher and request assistance and get some guidance, some minimal instruction as best as possible. It might not be completely aligned to what your teacher did that day, but it'll be close. Be aligned with our scope and sequence. That's correct. And all of that information will be very visible on our website. There'll be a programing schedule. So you'll be able to see by grade, level by hour and links to go ahead and tune in. There's going to be some coding that we need to just for attendance purposes to be able to account for students participating.

30:04

This is very preliminary. We're bringing you communication about this as quickly as possible. So, we'll certainly provide additional details once they get ironed out. Our staff have really just had one day of initial planning now that our board of trustees has have passed this opportunity. We'll probably do a whole other session on remote conferencing as that develops, because I just don't want it to get confused with virtual learning program because they're separate and apart. They're not interchangeable. What is interchangeable as well for decision making is between brick and mortar and virtual learning program. **If you want your children to receive virtual instruction for the first semester, for a long, long period of time, please enroll them in in the virtual learning program.**

30:58

So briefly, **let's talk about special education services.** There's a question about more speech and occupational therapy be offered through the virtual learning program. Our special education staff worked with parents in ARD's last year to be able to provide this a potential virtual or remote instruction. There will be services provided, but each parent will work directly with case managers and art facilitators to determine the best mode of instruction, as well as the supports that are necessary based on a student's IEP, which is the individual education plan.