FLORIDA INSTRUCTIONAL CONTINUITY PLAN (ICP)

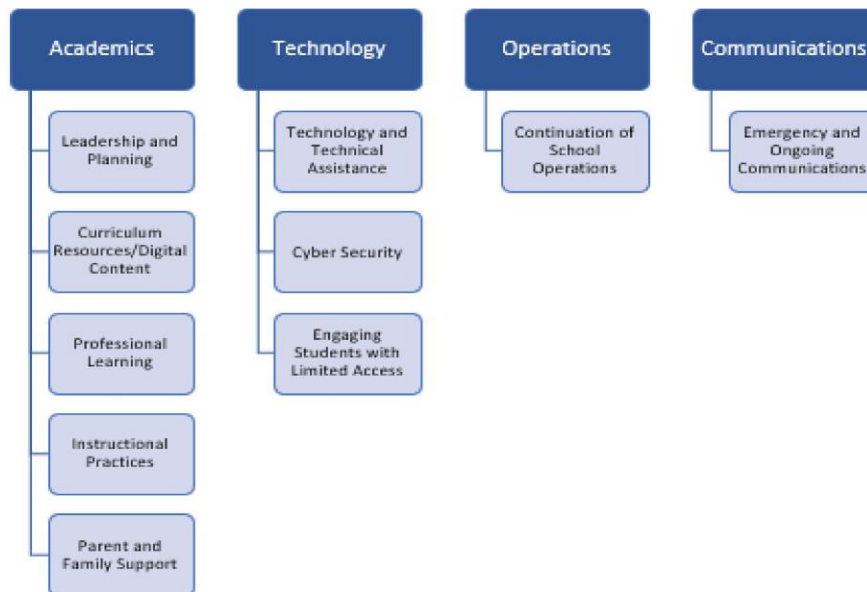**Charter School/MSID Number** | Ascend Academy Charter High School/ 5209 |

The Florida Department of Education {FDOE) developed an Instructional Continuity Framework that consists of ten components outlined below, each of which has a series of development activities. These components will serve as guidance resources for each Florida Local Educational Agency (LEA) to develop and refine their own Instructional Continuity Plan (ICP). LEAs and charter schools are encouraged to review the content in this portal and use it to support their ICP development. For questions about this information or the process of developing your ICP, please reach out to instructionalcontinuityplan@fldoe.org.

ICP Framework Components

The graphic below illustrates ten ICP components, each of which falls under one of the four broader categories at the top of the graphic: Academics, Technology, Operations and Communications.

Academics	Technology	Operations	Communications
Leadership and Planning	Technology and Technical Assistance	Continuation of School Operations	Emergency and Ongoing Communications
Curriculum Resources/Digital Content	Cyber Security		
Professional Learning	Engaging Students with Limited Access		
Instructional Practices			
Parent and Family Support			

ACADEMICS

Component 1: Leadership and Planning

The language in the ICP should: Specify LEA or charter school personnel who will serve on a cross-functional planning team; Identify desired outcomes or goals of the ICP; Define the critical success factors (CSFs) that determine achievement of the ICP desired outcomes or goals; Develop the action plans needed to address the CSFs, including the protocols and execution steps for the ICP; Develop a process for evaluating the effectiveness of the ICP.

On rare occasions, Ascend Academy Charter High School may need to close due to emergency situations. If and /or when this occurs, Ascend Academy Charter High School will make every opportunity to support our students, teachers, parents and communitiy.

The school personnel who will serve on the cross-functional planning team are listed below:
Stacy Johnson - Principal
Neisha Billy - ESE Specialist
Darlene Delmy Garci – Student
Advisor

The goals of the Instructional Continuity Plan are as follows:
- Integration of literacy in all curriculum areas
- Provide opportunities for parent involvement
- Accessibility to teachers and support staff
- Increased student attendance
- Increased student engagement
- Monitor student performance and identify students who are performing below level
- Increased opportunities for remediation and enrichment
- Increased opportunities for tutoring
-Develop a push in / pull out program via small groups and breakout sessions.

The critical success factors (CSFs) that determine achievement of the ICP desired outcomes or goals are:
- High expectations of all students and staff
- Clear policies and procedures for all stakeholders
- User friendly and clear communications methods
- The use of research based, engaging resources including progress monitoring tools
- Continuous professional development for all teachers and support staff
- Organized technology program
- Accountability of all staff members

The action plans needed to address the CSFs, including the protocols and execution steps for the ICP
- High expectations of all students and staff
o Ascend Academy Charter High School will continue to implement a culture of positivity and growth mindset with ll stakeholders
o Teachers and staff will incorporate students' interest in activities and lessons
o Teachers and staff will get to know students and build relationships
- Clear policies and procedures for all stakeholders
o Expectations will be taught to all stakeholders
o Teachers will be taught how to create clear lesson plan

Component 2: Curriculum Resources/Digital Content

The language in the ICP should: Reaffirm desired outcomes, goals, and instructional strategies of the remote learning program; Confirm LMS providers and if selecting a new provider, schedule product demonstrations; Delegate a cross-functional team to monitor the performance of the LMS and make recommendations for improvements or modifications; Provide ongoing training and professional learning ensuring new hires are included; Allow planning time (two to three months) for teachers and instructional staff to become familiar with digital content to be used within the LMS, including appropriate instructional supports, e.g., coaching.

If needed, Ascend Academy Charter High School is prepared to quickly pivot to remote learning.

The goal of Ascend's remote learning program (if necessary) is to provide a high quality, standards based, engaging curriculum to all students. The quality of instruction via remote learning is expected to be on par with that of brick and mortar. Students who are not demonstrating growth will be provided with additional resources and support. Teachers will also be provided with feedback and coaching.

Ascend Academy Charter is well equipped to provide a quality remote learning experience. We currently partner with APEX Learning solutions. APEX Learning solutions provide a high quality, standards based engaging curriculum and the scaffolds and supports that our students need to be successful. In addition, Ascend utilizes the Google Workspace For Education. The tools and services include messaging and collaboration applications such as Gmail, Google Classroom, Meets, Calendar and much more. Ascend partners with Gradelink, which serves as one of our school's information systems. All teachers and staff members utilize BASIS.
To ensure safety and integrity, Ascend has also partnered with Netop Vision to provide easy to use classroom management software.

All members of the cross-functional team aid in monitoring the performance of the school's LMS. Based on observation and input from teachers, students and families, recommendations are made for modifications and/or improvements.

Ongoing training is provided to all staff members.
- All staff members were provided with formal training by an APEX representative.
- All staff members were required to complete the Gradelink training
- All staff members were trained on the Netop Vision software
- All staff members were trained on the use of the various Google applications
- All staff members have the opportunity to review the various platforms via tutorials and through collaborative meetings.

Ascend Academy Charter High School has been using APEX and Google Classrooms for the past five years. We are in our 2nd year of Netop Vision and we partnered with Gradelink this past summer. Our teachers and staff have had great experience in using these platforms. However, continuous training and support is always available through tutorials, direct support, recorded meetings and one-to-one support.

Component 3: Professional Learning

The language in the ICP should: Provide leaders and instructional staff multiple survey opportunities to determine actual needs regarding professional learning; Arrange time for professional learning opportunities for school leaders and staff, keeping in mind best practices for adult learners; Provide for implementation of professional learning for educational staff; Assess the effectiveness of professional learning efforts to continuously improve the process and provide relevant opportunities in the future.

Leaders and instructional staff are provided with surveys each quarter. In addition, informal surveys are performed on a regular basis.

All staff have the opportunity to take advantage of courses offered by the District's Learning Across Broward and Broward Virtual University.
Members of the leadership and support staff team take advantage of courses offered by the Florida Consortium of Charter Schools.
Each week on Wednesdays, Ascend Academy Charter High School facilitates weekly collaborative staff meetings with all members of the faculty.

There is a process in place for professional development for all staff members. Teachers and staff members are provided with coverage when they need to attend a professional development session during school hours.

Assess the effectiveness of professional learning efforts to continuously improve the process and provide relevant opportunities in the future.

Staff attended a professional development series that engaged them in the areas of enhanced curriculum development, student engagement and virtual instruction.

Teachers and staff attended a professional development series on the Vision classroom management software hosted by Netop Vision. Vision allows teachers to monitor individual student computer activity in real time.
Teachers and staff attended a "Social Emotional Training" that was hosted by our Mental Health professional who is an expert in the area of schools and young adults. Ongoing weekly training/support is provided by our in house mental health counselor. In addition, ongoing training is provided to teachers on student engagement, student motivation and student assessment and overall student success.

Throughout the school year, all teachers and staff members will participate in professional development to improve student success in both at home and in person learning. In addition, to our weekly collaborative staff meeting where best practices are shared and the leadership team provides guidance, the teachers have a weekly Professional Learning Community (PLC) where they also share best practices.

Each month, teachers have scheduled meetings with a member of the administrative team to discuss the use of technology as related to the online learning students and the review of students grades to enhance the safety net of those who may be falling behind.

Through the social emotional learning professional development, teachers and staff will relieve the anxiety and stress that students may possess because of the pandemic and other troubling personal life situations. Once they have established a calm supportive attitude in the classroom, students will have the capacity to advance to academic excellence.

All new teachers are provided with similar trainings, as well as, a mentor.

Component 4: Instructional Practices

The language in the ICP should: Identify needs of educators relative to online and hybrid teaching experience and expertise; Determine which teachers have extensive background in these delivery models, and which will need more help; Develop guidance, resources, and training on the best practices for distance/hybrid education delivery for those who need help onboarding to these practices; Implement professional learning about best practices for hybrid teaching for educational staff; Assess the effectiveness of delivery methods and alter strategies as needed to engage all students.

All staff members, including teachers are surveyed on their experience and expertise in technology (online and hybrid teaching). General and personalized training is provided based on individual needs. New staff members are paired with mentors to assist with support and guidance.
Trainings are recorded and made available to all staff members.

All platforms used at Ascend have tutorials that can be accessed at any time. Ascend also has the ability to receive live support from representatives associated with the various platforms.

All staff members have the opportunity to take courses offered through the District's LAB and BVU. In additional, Ascend Academy Charter is a member of the Florida Consortium of Public Charter Schools. The Consortium provides a plethora of resources and training material on online and hybrid instructional practices.

Professional development on instructional practices is also provided during the weekly PLC and the weekly collaborative staff meetings.

Through regular observations, coaching sessions and surveys from teachers, students and parents, leadership/members of the cross functional planning team are able to assess the effectiveness of delivery methods and alter strategies as needed to engage all students.

Component 5: Parent and Family Support

The language in the ICP should: Identify the household technology capabilities and needs of students and their families; Establish effective two-way lines of communications with parents and families of students using a variety of media; Provide guidance and direction to students, parents, and families on how to create distraction-free learning environments at home that are conducive to learning; Develop and communicate to staff and parents/families the protocols for providing special education services and accommodations for students in need; Develop a plan to conduct regular outreach and wellness checks to help support the health and safety of students and their families; Develop a plan to ensure that the needs of special student populations, e.g., ESE, ELL, homeless, etc., are being supported in keeping with the requirements of IEPs and other educational specification documents.

Students are surveyed when laptops are issued to each enrolled student. At that time, families have to inform the school of their household technology needs. Hotspots are made available for those families who will not be able to utilize school issued laptops for lack of Internet access. The school also provides information on low cost solutions to families for internet access.

Teachers have school-issued cell phones for daily parent communications. Parentlink is extensively used for school announcements via phone, text and email. Communication with parents is also facilitated via Gradelink, the school's website and other online meeting forums.

Parents and students are informed about creating the appropriate environments at home and students meet with the Academic Advisor when they are presented with their schedule in order to be informed about the school's expectations for a distraction free environment.

Students with disabilities will be receiving support services on a highly monitored and regularly monitored basis than those peers who are not disabled.
In addition, students with Individual Education Plans (IEPs) will continue to be provided with their services and accommodations as identified on their individual plans. In addition to the school-based progress monitoring systems, students with disabilities will be evaluated based on the progress made on their annual goals.

English Language Learners will be receiving support services on a highly monitored and regular basis. English Language Learners are provided with individual personal dictionaries, along with other resources and supplies. For those Ells who are not making adequate academic progress and/or demonstrating regression, the ESOL contact meets weekly with each student and an individualized achievement plan is created. Each student is paired with a peer mentor and the student is strongly advised to attend before and/or after school tutoring. A conference is also scheduled with the student's family and we believe that family support is vital to student's success. Through our ESOL folder on our school's Google Drive, information is shared with teachers about new and improved teaching strategies.

Other special populations such as homeless and at-risk students are served according to observations of staff, intake surveys and grades that provide rationale for services.

TECHNOLOGY

Component 6: Technology and Technical Support

The language in the ICP should: Identify the technology staff members who will be key to the ICP planning process; Determine the robustness of the technology infrastructure for delivering synchronous and asynchronous instruction with crashes or other service disruptions, and upgrade as needed; Determine which students will need devices (if the LEA or charter school does not already have a 1:1 initiative); Survey students and families to determine which are in need of internet access and provide this access as needed; Provide devices that will support the digital curriculum and also complies with Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE); Identify and implement a web content filtering solution for all devices used by students and staff; Identify roles needed to support technology in a remote learning model and reallocate personnel accordingly.

The head of technology and members of the planning team will provide ongoing support in the area of technology.

The technology structure at Ascend Academy Charter High School delivered a seamless synchronous and asynchronous delivery system with no crashes or service disruptions. Servers and supporting software are upgraded periodically to ensure that all students and staff have equitable access to instruction and delivery. In addition to those upgrades, the coaxial cable system was upgraded to fiber optics two years ago, and the results have been consistent with high speed, reliable internet service.

The school has a **1**:1 initiative, with the added benefit of access to Hotspots to any family who cannot afford internet access at home. All families are surveyed at the time of student laptop pick up and those who register during the year are surveyed prior to starting classes.

A web content filtering system provided through Google Education monitors web content traffic and flags inappropriate sites and then are closed to student access. Google maintains a list of inappropriate sites to prevent access to any student issued device. Inappropriate key words search are also monitored and sent to the technology coordinator.

Staff is immediately allocated to the remote learning model, with administrators acting in the capacity of monitoring the remote platforms that students use at home. Teachers have been training on curriculum planning for remote learning. Teachers and staff all have school issued cell phones for constant communication. The principal will routinely enter the virtual classrooms to interact and observe students and teacher delivery of curriculum.

Component 7: Cyber Security

The language in the ICP should: Identify recommended national and state cyber security framework standards to be adopted by LEAs and charter schools; Include a business continuity plan tailored to the LEA or charter school operations; Include an incident response plan tailored to the LEA or charter school operations; Stipulate all cyber security-related policies and procedures aimed at safeguarding the entire LEA or charter school information system and IT infrastructure; Include an executive summary of the LEA's or charter school's current security posture; Include current Plan of Actions and Milestones for cyber security improvements to maximize ICP effectiveness.

Ascend Academy Charter High School utilizes resources from Center for Internet Security's toolkits. According to the Center for Internet Security, the Cyber Hygiene Campaign is a low-cost program that any organization can adopt to achieve immediate and effective defenses against cyberattacks. The program focuses on the following areas of concerns:
1. Know what's connected to your network
2. Implement key security settings to help protect your system
3. Limit and manage those who have administrative privileges to change, bypass, or override security settings
4. Regularly update all applications, software and operating systems

Ascend also utilizes aspects of the NIST Cybersecurity Framework. The Framework is organized by five key functions - Identify, Protect, Detect, Respond, Recover. These are the standards currently being considered by Ascend Academy Charter High School in its plan to adopt a process of security for its IT system.
- Identify critical enterprise processes and assets
- Document information flows
- Maintain hardware and software inventory
- Establish policies for cybersecurity that include roles and responsibilities
- Identify threats, vulnerabilities, and risk to assets

The primary priority of the technology at Ascend is to improve student learning. The system is protected with security measures which prevent and detect/monitor unauthorized and inappropriate use. Provisions are made to keep the technology current. Appropriate training and professional development is provided to staff and students. Ascend Academy Charter High School adheres to the laws regarding technology and student safety, security and governing records.
In the event of a security breach, Ascend Academy Charter High School will report the incident to the necessary agencies.

A web content filtering system provided through Google Education monitors web content traffic and flags inappropriate sites and then are closed to student access. Google maintains a list of inappropriate sites to prevent access to any student issued device. Inappropriate key words search are also monitored and sent to the technology coordinator.

In the event of a cyber-attack or threat (big or small), the school has a business continuity plan in place that entails the planning and preparation of unexpected adverse situations. This plan will allow the school to remain open and provide services to all stakeholders. The plan is one that is constantly being updated. The school has secured funds to facilitate the 1:1 technology initiative. All platforms used are secure and data is protected. With Google Classrooms, only students who are enrolled in the specific classes are invited to attend by the teacher. The teacher has control over who attends the class. In the event that teachers lose internet service at home while teaching, each teacher has a school cell phone that can be used to connect to the internet. These are just some examples of the business continuity plan

Component 8: Engaging Students with Limited Access

The language in the ICP should: Specify a team of service providers and determine a point person for communication with families about the efforts to provide education and supports for their child; Develop a plan to communicate early and often with students and parents to identify needs and ensure supports; Ensure that LEA leadership is engaged with special education service providers to deliver needed supports and resources to educators, learners and families; Research and implement best practices in online special education.

The homeroom teacher is the point person for communication with families about the efforts to provide education and supports for the student. Extra time is built into the homeroom period for the homeroom teachers to meet with students and review grades, attendance and overall performance. The homeroom teacher then communicates with other staff members and contacts the parent with a plan of action. The Principal,ESE Specialist, and ESOL Contact also communicate with families regularly.

The leadership and collaborative problem-solving teams at Ascend Academy Charter High School meet on a regular basis to review the Early Warning System Indicators to identify the students who are most in need of specific and individualized interventions. The support staff will continue to provide pull out and push in services to struggling students in the areas of Mathematics and Reading during the school day. Students who earn a "D" or lower in any subject area are offered free tutoring which is held before or after school. With the school's new student information system, Gradelink, parents are able to receive automatic academic and attendance alerts. Parents/families are also provided with their own login credentials to Gradelink.

The ESE Specialist attends monthly ESE meetings and other trainings/webinars to learn about best practices in online special education. The ESE Specialist works closely with the Mental Health Counselor and the Academic Advisor to ensure that the needed supports and resources are delivered to students, families and staff.

The ESE Specialist, Support Facilitator, ESOL Contact, Mental Health Counselor and Academic Advisor will continue to provide services to students with special needs online and/or through other means such as phone, email or messaging. Implementation of best practices of online special education is unique to each student and the services that he or she may require. As situations evolve, the ESE Specialist and other service providers will research current trends and align them to the specific needs of the IEP for each student.
Ascend will continue to provide alternative paper assignments for those students who cannot work successfully online. We will work with families and students to pick up and/or deliver paperwork if needed. For Art/Drawing classes, Ascend prepares the necessary supplies needed for each student. The supplies are either picked up by the families or delivered by a member of the administrative team.

OPERATIONS

Component 9: Continuation of School Operations

The language in the ICP should: Identify the facets of school operations that are impacted by extended school closures along with the essential personnel needed to support learning continuity through remote teaching and learning; Identify and communicate expectations of charter school or LEA staff related to schedules and work performance during school closures; Develop and communicate an execution plan to provide food services to students and families in need during school closures; Develop and execute a plan to provide special education services and accommodations to students in need during school closures; Conduct outreach to community organizations to provide comprehensive support to students and families during school closures.

Extended school closures impact these school operations.
- Instructional Delivery
- Budget
- Food Service
- Campus Security
- Staff Communications
- Mental Health Assessments/Service Delivery
- Technology
- Student Communications

The essential personnel are the administrative team that supports the adjustments in school operations, the teaching staff who delivers the remote instructions with relevant content and appropriate assessments, and the technology staff who supports the technological needs of all stakeholders. Food service workers also support the school's continuity of services by providing meal service for pick-up to all enrolled students. Mental Health counselor supports students remotely with office hours to connect remotely to all students in need of such services.

All staff report to remote work environments at assigned times during school hours (there is a scheduled check-in process) and administrators work normal hours on-site unless forbidden to do so by specific criteria. Performance of job responsibilities are monitored by administrative staff as directed by the Governing Board. Food service is implemented by a two day a week program that program that provides 10 meals each (of breakfast and lunch) for each enrolled student. A food service worker is on site those two days a week to prepare and package the meals. The food service program is promoted through mailers, phone calls, text messages, and email to all students and their families.

In some cases, food is delivered by the administrative staff to students' homes.
Accommodations for ELL, ESE, homeless population and other at-risk students as identified by school staff are made through phone calls, Google Meets, text messaging, and letters home during school closures. Assistance that cannot be provided by the school to these populations are referred to additional community resources. Ascend HS counselors and guidance staff work as liaisons with these community groups to enhance support and services.

COMMUNICATIONS

Component 10: Emergency and Ongoing Communications

The language in the ICP should: Identify stakeholder groups within the school community along with the appropriate communication channels for each group; Clarify roles and responsibilities of school personnel assigned to communicate with stakeholder groups; Define the scope of communications to be sent to stakeholders along with a schedule for such communications to ensure coordination; Publish guidance for stakeholders and ICPs on the charter school or LEA website leading up to and throughout the duration of extended school closures.

Stakeholder Groups and Communication Channels

Parents and families
 - Gradelink Smart Send, Parentlink, Google Classrooms, email, text messaging, phone calls, letters, website and home visits (when necessary)
Students
 - Gradelink Smart Send, Google Classrooms, email, text messaging, phone calls, letters and APEX, website
Staff and faculty
 - email, group chat, text messages, phone calls and Google Meets
Governing Board
 - email, phone calls and Google Meets
District
 - email, phone calls, Microsoft Teams
Vendors
 - email, text messages, phone calls and Google Meets
Community
 - website

Roles and Responsibilities

Director
 - communicate with administrative team
Principal
- Oversee the daily operations of the school
- Ensure the safety and security of students and staff
- Coordinate and communicate all emergency policies and procedures to all stakeholders
- Delegate functions of oversight
- Ensure that the school's website is updated with pertinent information
- Ensure that the District and the Charter Support Office is updated with pertinent information
Support Staff
- Ensure that all students' including students with special needs are supported and provided with necessary information
- Support teachers
- Communicate with parents, families and students.
Teachers
- Provide instruction and communicate with students via Google Classrooms and Google Meets
- Regular communication with parents and families
- Assess the needs of students and relay information to the leadership team