

Branch ISD

Educational Service Agency

Continuity of Learning and COVID-19 Response Plan (“Plan”)

As a result of COVID-19 and the closing of school buildings for the 2019-2020 School Year, school districts must submit a Continuity of Learning and COVID-19 Response Plan (“Plan”) in order to continue to receive state aid for operations. Although schools are closed and not providing in-person instruction, teaching and learning must continue. Michigan educators have been called to provide our students with continued learning.

There are varied states of readiness to provide continuity in learning among districts. Even within districts of multiple school sites, there are varied states of readiness. It is expected that schools will provide instruction at a distance using a variety of methods that meet local needs, including printed materials, phone contact, email, virtual learning, or a combination to meet student needs. We should avoid assuming that continuity in learning can only occur through online means.

While many educators have been providing distance learning opportunities, the Governor’s Executive Order ([EO 2020-35](#)) requires all schools to begin providing learning opportunities for all students no later than April 28, 2020. Districts who are able to begin their plans earlier are encouraged to do so.

Each District shall submit a single completed Assurance Document, Budget Outline, and Continuity of Learning Plan to its Intermediate School District. Each Public School Academy shall submit a completed Assurance Document, Budget Outline, and Continuity of Learning Plan to its Authorizer. A single Application should be filed for the district rather than multiple applications for individual schools within a district. The following items are required for the application which may be submitted beginning April 8, 2020:

1. Assurances Document
2. Continuity of Learning
3. PlanBudget Outline

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Continuity of Learning and COVID-19 Response Plan (“Plan”) Guiding Principles

As Districts and Public School Academies complete the Assurances and Continuity of Learning Plans, they should consider utilizing the following principles to guide their work:

Keep Students at the Center

Intentional outreach to continue building relationships and maintain connections. Help students feel safe and valued. At minimum, plan to do the following:

- Plan for Student Learning: Build on each student’s strengths, interests, and needs and use this knowledge to positively affect learning.
- Develop a Weekly Plan and Schedule: Offer routines and structures for consistency and for the balancing of think time, work time, and play time for health and well-being.
- Contact Families: Partner to support student learning through ongoing communication and collaboration. This will not look the same for every student and family—safety remains the priority. Provide translations as necessary.

Design Learning for Equity and Access

Plan and deliver content in multiple ways so all students can access learning.

- Teach Content: Set goals using knowledge of each student, content area standards, and of Michigan Merit Curriculum.
- Deliver Flexible Instruction: Consider how to deliver content depending on tools and resources accessible to each student. Alternative modes of instruction may include use of online learning, telephone communications, email, virtual instruction, videos, slideshows, project-based learning, use of instructional packets, or a combination to meet diverse student needs.
- Engage Families: Communicate with families about engagement strategies to support students as they access the learning. Families are critical partners. Provide translations as necessary.

Assess Student Learning

Manage and monitor student learning and plan what is next for learning including the potential need for summer and supplemental learning.

- Check Student Learning: Use a variety of strategies to monitor, assess, and provide feedback to students about their learning.
- Make Instructional Adjustments: Use formative assessment results to guide educators’ reflection on effectiveness of instruction and to determine next steps for student learning.
- Engage Families: Communicate with families about assessment results in order to inform next steps and the potential for supplemental summer learning. Provide translations as necessary.

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Continuity of Learning and COVID-19 Response Plan (“Plan”) Assurances

Date Submitted: **4/17/2020**

Name of District: **Branch Intermediate School District**

Address of District: **370 Morse Street, Coldwater, MI 49036**

District Code Number: **12-000**

Email Address of the District: www.Branch-isd.org, or jenkinsk@branch-isd.org

Name of Intermediate School District: **Branch Intermediate School District**

Name of Authorizing Body (if applicable):

This Assurance document needs to be returned to your Intermediate School District or, for Public School Academies, your Authorizing Body with your Continuity of Learning Plan and Budget Outline beginning April 8, 2020 to indicate that the District will adopt a plan to ensure continuous learning for all students through the remainder of the 2019-2020 school year.

Districts should submit a single district plan that relates to all of their schools.

The applicant hereby provides assurance it will follow the requirements for a Plan for the remainder of the 2019-2020 school year:

1. Applicant assures that all student learning will take place under the direction of a teacher of record for each student enrolled in the district.
2. Applicant assures that it will continue to pay school employees during the balance of the 2019-2020 school year under the same terms and conditions established prior to the school closure order period.
3. Applicant assures that the Plan was developed in collaboration with district administrators, school board members, teachers, and local bargaining units.
4. Applicant assures that food distribution has been arranged for or provided for eligible students.
5. Applicant assures coordination between applicant and Intermediate School District in which the District/PSA is located to mobilize disaster relief child care centers.
6. Applicant assures that to the extent practicable the District/PSA will in good faith provide students with IEPs/Section 504 Plans the opportunity to participate in learning consistent with existing plans.
7. Applicant assures that Continuity of Learning and COVID-19 Response Plan, Assurance Document, and Budget Outline will be posted immediately following approval to the District's/PSA's website.

Branch ISD assures that it will follow the requirements for the Plan for the remainder of the 2019-2020 school year.

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Continuity of Learning and COVID-19 Response Plan (“Plan”)

The goal of a Continuity of Learning Plan and COVID-19 Response Plan is to ensure that each District or Public School Academy is providing, to the best of its ability, each student with alternative modes of instruction to help them stay on pace in their learning. This application recognizes that there is no “one-size-fits-all” solution; multiple means of engaging students and supporting families may be necessary that may vary by grade level, school building, or student population served.

For the purposes of the Plan, “district” refers to school districts and public school academies.

Date Submitted: **April 17, 2020**

Name of District: **Branch Intermediate School District**

Address of District: **370 Morse Street, Coldwater, MI 49036**

District Code Number: **12-000**

Email Address of the District Superintendent: **jenkinsk@branch-isd.org**

Name of Intermediate School District: **Branch Intermediate School District**

Name of Authorizing Body (if applicable):

In accordance with Executive Order 2020-35 a Plan must include all of the following parts:

- 1. Please describe the methods the district will use to provide alternative modes of instruction other than in-person instruction and a summary of materials each pupil and the pupil’s parents or guardians will need to access meaningfully the alternative modes of instruction included in the Plan. If the Plan relies on electronic instruction, the Plan must ensure to the extent feasible that pupils have access to a connected device capable of accessing the electronic instruction and must not penalize a pupil for the pupil’s inability to fully participate.**

“Alternative modes of instruction” means modes of pupil instruction, other than in-person instruction, that may include, without limitation, partnerships with other districts or intermediate districts or community colleges or institutions of higher education, use of vendors, use of online learning, telephone communications, email, virtual instruction, videos, slideshows, project-based learning, use of instructional packets, or a hybrid of multiple modes of learning that still promote recommended practices for social distancing to mitigate the spread of COVID- .

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District/ PSA Response:

Branch ISD will be using a distance learning approach of instruction within the methodology of this plan to help mitigate the spread of COVID-19. Branch ISD has five service areas that are included in this plan: Adult Education, Early Education, Career and Technical Education, Special Education and Branch County Early College. This plan incorporates ALL students in each of these service areas and the needs of the whole child are always at the forefront of this plan.

Our plan will include communication between the Central Office and each service area weekly, via cabinet meetings, emails, phone calls, etc., however instruction will be directly communicated from the service area and classroom teachers more specifically on a weekly basis. Guidance for parents/students will be communicated through email, social media, telephone calls, Zoom, Google Classrooms, Microsoft Teams and other forms of communication.

The district plans to use a hybrid model of instruction using hard copy instructional packets and/or online learning platforms. For those students that have internet access, but don't have a device, devices may be made available. Students without internet access will have access to instructional materials through a weekly instructional packet. All students will need access to materials such as paper, pencils, and crayons, which will be made available to families that don't have them. All students will have access to grade-level/course textbooks, supplies and software as needed to complete their work.

No student will be penalized for their inability to fully participate in this remote learning plan.

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Each Service Area has linked their specific plan below.

ADULT EDUCATION

[Adult Education COL Plan](#)

EARLY EDUCATION

[Early Education COL Plan](#)

CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

[Branch Area Careers Center Continuity of Learning Response Plan](#)

SPECIAL EDUCATION

[BISD Special Education - Waldron Learning Center Continuity of Learning Plan](#)

BRANCH COUNTY EARLY COLLEGE

[Continuity of Learning plan BCEC April 2020](#)

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- 2. Please describe the methods the district will use to keep pupils at the center of educational activities, including outreach to continue building relationships and maintain connections, and to help pupils feel safe and valued.**

District/ PSA Response:

Building and maintaining relationships between educators and students is one of the most important facets of this continuity of learning plan. Educators will have the flexibility to use different and non-traditional means to continue those relationships. Depending upon the age, maturity and skill level of each student, building these relationships and maintaining connections between students and teachers will look different.

Teachers, and/or their designee (teacher assistant, para-professional, etc.) will be expected to make contact with every student at least one time during the week. This may be done through the use of technology (for those that have access) such as email, text, Google Hangout or other forms of a virtual meeting or through weekly phone calls. For students with technology access teachers will also make sure to communicate multiple times each week through the instructional platform, with an emphasis on continuing to build relationships and maintain connections.

If students do not have access to technology, teachers will include weekly notes to students in their instructional packet that focus on building relationships and maintaining connections. Stamped envelopes will be provided so that students can respond via US Mail. We will encourage two-way relationships that are appropriate for each age level and service area.

Counselors and student support personnel in the district will continue to support and build relationships with students. These supports may include, but are not limited to the following: scholarship assistance, supporting the 2020 seniors in finishing up this school year and transitioning to the next phase in their lives, supporting all in their sense of loss, college acceptance, and access to food.

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- 3. Please describe the district's plans to deliver content in multiple ways so that all pupils can access learning.**

District/ PSA Response:

Educators will have the flexibility to extend learning in the manner they choose that is most appropriate for the age of their students, and for their particular service area.

For those students without technology, the main mode of delivery will be through hard copy instructional packets. This will be supplemented with phone conferencing to support instruction. Instructional packets may be mailed, picked up at the school, or delivered through the school lunch program depending on the individual circumstance of each student.

For students with technology, content will be delivered through the online platform, email, and other social media sites. Teachers will be accessible multiple times per week to provide support to the student's learning.

- 4. Please describe the district's plans to manage and monitor learning by pupils.**

District/ PSA Response:

For students without technology access, teachers will review the learning packet and provide feedback to the student during their weekly phone call, virtual meeting, email, or through U.S postal service. Learning packets with written feedback will be returned to the student in a timely fashion. Feedback from the teacher will include differentiated work as needed, along with examples to support student learning. A phone call would also be used as a follow-up if needed.

For students with technology, teachers will monitor student access and assignment completion on a daily basis within the instructional platform. Teachers will provide feedback to students on assignments through the instructional platform as they are completed (or on a daily basis). Teachers will differentiate instruction within the platform to meet each student's needs.

Each service area will provide a method for documenting staff-student contact and feedback to students.

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- 5. Please attach a budget outline estimating additional expenditures associated with the Plan and sources of revenue to pay for those expenditures.**

District/ PSA Response:

At this time no additional expenditures have been associated with implementing this plan. BISD will be using general funds from each service area (Adult Ed, Voc Ed, Special Ed, General Ed), along with Federal and State grant funds to accommodate this plan.

Directors will keep track of any additional expenditures that may be incurred in case there is any additional funding that may come available and the possibility of having to have this documented in order to receive the funding.

- 6. Please describe the manner in which district administrators, board members, teachers, and any representatives of teachers collaborated in development of the Plan.**

District/ PSA Response:

This plan was developed in collaboration with district staff, board members and representatives of the both unions within the district.

- Email entire staff asking for questions and input regarding the plan
- Sent plan to district administrators for review
- Sent plan to board members for review
- Discussed and amended plan at BIO/Administrative Joint-Committee meeting

- 7. Please describe the methods the district will use to notify pupils and parents or guardians of the Plan.**

District/ PSA Response:

This plan will be placed on the district's website. The plan will also be shared via social media and email.

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- 8. Please provide an estimate of the date on which the district will begin implementation of the Plan, which must be no later than April 28, 2020.**

District/ PSA Response:

Estimated date of implementation is April 20, 2020

- 9. Please describe the assistance, to the extent feasible, to pupils enrolled in any postsecondary dual enrollment courses under Public Act of 160 of 1996, as amended, MCL 388.511 to 388.524 , and Career and Technical Preparation Act, 258 PA 2000, as amended, MCL 388.1901 to 388.1913, in completing the courses during the 2019-2020 school year.**

District/ PSA Response:

Please see attached Branch County Early College Continuity of Learning Plan linked above.

Please see BACC Career and Technical Education Continuity of Learning Plan linked above.

Branch ISD has been and will continue to be in contact with all of its postsecondary dual enrollment partners. We have provided opportunities to our students to finalize their courses virtually. If there are barriers for the student, we have worked to provide hot spots, wifi, or internet access for the student. If any barrier cannot be overcome, the college/university has already communicated that the student can take an incomplete and finish the course in the future starting from the point where they left off.

Concurrently, BISD will be directly following the MDE guidelines on Career and Technical Educational programming. Students will be provided appropriate resources to continue their learning and to progress through their course standards. BACC-CTE students will have the opportunity to continue their learning in their course of study. This may include, but is not limited to virtual learning, project-based learning, independent practice, essays, etc. Accommodations will be made to assist students in obtaining specific certifications where applicable.

- 10. Please describe how the district will continue to provide or arrange for continuation of food distribution to eligible pupils.**

District/ PSA Response:

Branch ISD will continue to support and partner with our LEAs to provide food service to students.

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11. Please confirm that the district will continue to pay school employees while redeploying staff to provide meaningful work in the context of the Plan, subject to any applicable requirements of a collective bargaining agreement.

District/ PSA Response:

Branch ISD confirms that we will continue to pay school employees while redeploying staff to provide meaningful work in the context of the Plan, subject to any applicable requirements of either of our collective bargaining agreements.

12. Provide describe how the district will evaluate the participation of pupils in the Plan.

District/ PSA Response:

Branch ISD will be keeping track of instructional packets sent out or picked up. We will also be asking teachers and principals to have a system that will track participation virtually.

Communicating with students and families will also be tracked to monitor student's social and emotional wellbeing, family needs and identifying possible supports needed.

After monitoring the participation rates, we will be reaching out to students to develop plans on how to connect with them for better service. Ultimately, we understand that there will be some barriers within this plan, however we also understand that we will have to evaluate and modify the plan to increase participation rates for pupils.

13. Please describe how the district will provide mental health supports to pupils affected by a state of emergency or state of disaster prompted by COVID-19 .

District/ PSA Response:

BISD will be using all of the resources at our disposal to monitor the mental health and well-being of our students. This may include using teachers, para-professionals, teacher aides, ancillary staff, administrators, counselors, school nurses and all others to check in with students. All BISD staff will help connect the family to outside agencies to help meet their needs. While different staff are making weekly phone calls they will monitor and assess the needs of students and families. If a need is presented the staff member will elevate that need to the principal or appropriate supervisor to make the necessary follow-up. The principal/program administrator/manager will hold weekly meetings, or will contact staff weekly, to identify any students or families in need.

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The BISD Attendance Coordinator will call students and families on his caseload on a regular basis. This support may not be about physical attendance in school, but will be about attending to continued learning via distance learning. The attendance coordinator will be used as yet another check in with students and families to determine if all critical needs are being met and to shore up any deficiencies in support that each family may need. The attendance coordinator will also serve as a liaison between the families and each school administrator and/or counselor.

Telehealth may be used when available for students that have technology.

14. Please describe how the district will support the efforts of the intermediate district in which the district is located to mobilize disaster relief childcare centers as described in Executive Order 2020-16 or any executive order that follows it.

District/ PSA Response:

Branch ISD has been collaborating, and will continue to collaborate, to mobilize disaster relief childcare centers in our county. To date, the private childcare centers have been able to meet the needs of the families that have been referred to us needing child care. We are prepared to open up a disaster childcare center in one of our existing programs, should the need arise.

Optional question:

15. Does the District plan to adopt a balanced calendar instructional program for the remainder of the 2019-2020 school year? Does the District plan to adopt a balanced calendar instructional program for the 2020-2021 school year?

District/ PSA Response:

No, not at this time. We have already agreed upon a county wide calendar for 2020-2021, which has a pre-Labor Day start. In conversation with local superintendents we have agreed to stay with the established calendar until directed otherwise by the State.

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Name of District Leader Submitting Application: **Kris Jenkins**

Date Approved: **4/17/2020**

Name of ISD Superintendent/Authorizer Designee: **Kris Jenkins**

Date Submitted to Superintendent and State Treasurer: **4/17/2020**

Confirmation approved Plan is posted on District/PSA website: **4/17/2020**