

Learning Continuity and Attendance Plan Template (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.]

Rising Sun Montessori (RSM) serves approximately 150 students in grades TK - 8 in two buildings located on one campus in El Dorado Hills. RSM was initially authorized in 2014 by the Buckeye Union School District. Our school was a collaboration of educators and leaders across all sectors with a combined 125 years of experience in Montessori Education. Since the time RSMS has opened, we have seen a steady increase in the number of FRM qualifying students and families. This, combined with the geographic diversity of our families has created significant challenges in a "post-covid" environment. Many of our families live in the foothills of El Dorado County from Shingle Springs to Placerville. As COVID-19 cases began to rise in the late winter and early Spring of 2020, RSM along with all other schools in the county transitioned to a distanced-based learning program with our students. An Emergency Board Meeting was held and RSM ceased all site-based learning for the 2019-20 school year on March 14th, 2020.

Immediately following on Monday, March 16th, our teachers and administrative team gathered to establish the scope of our new distance learning program. RSM is proud of the fact that daily student to teacher online interaction was established on Tuesday March 17th, 2020. We were able to adapt and communicate quickly with all RSM families in order to determine who needed assistance with technology access via chrome books and mobile hot spots..

This daily interaction was successful in that students continued to learn new concepts, attend multiple daily and weekly live interactions with teachers and maintained their learning to what we believe to be the best possible outcome the circumstances permitted. Our Special Education students were also served as new Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) were established via remote meetings with all care providers. These IEPs were formulated for each student who receives special education to accommodate the services received by students at school and create new services from the "home" setting. RSM would like make special mention of our authorizer, the Buckeye Union School District which worked with us in continuing to provide free meals to all students who qualified. This was a much appreciated support from them.

As the school year wound down, we were also able to provide our 8th grade students with a vastly scaled down and appropriately socially distanced promotion ceremony. Our 8th grade families called this event the highlight of their year. With the summer planning season upon us, RSM leadership was in constant contact with both the El Dorado County Office of Education (EDCOE) and the El Dorado County Director of Public Health as local and state guidelines for re-opening were considered.

RSM began the process of engaging stakeholders about school plans for 2020/21. Our families were split about 70/30 in favor of returning to a site based program, however we also understood that there were families with health conditions which would make a return to classroom based instruction for their students an impossibility. As more and more districts in California and across the United States made the decision to begin the school year with distance learning, RSM made the determination that for our student population, our parents and our teachers it would be in their best interest to offer both online distance learning and in person learning. The decision was also undertaken to change our distance learning platform to Google Classroom exclusively. As staff was brought on board for the 2020-21 school year, training sessions were established for both site based and distance learning protocols. In alignment with the El Dorado County Office of Public Health and EDCOE, RSM developed a plan to offer site based education with distance learning students being able to connect live to lessons, morning meetings, and for socialization with their peers and teachers. Following state guidelines established in SB 98, RSM offers the appropriate site-based minutes, with distance learners having access to live lessons as well as after school 1 to 1 check ins for distance learners. This program not only allows families a choice for what is best for their families, but it also serves to reduce site-based class sizes with an average of 12 students per classroom in grades TK-8. This in turn provides for appropriate social distancing measures on site. Lunch is served at classroom-specific lunch tables in the lunch area and start times, entrance and egress points and dismissal times are all staggered based on grade level. This decreases the risk of one student-group exposing another student group to the virus. In addition, students and staff were given training on proper hand washing, cleaning and use of personal protective equipment (PPE). Our first shipment of PPE from EDCOE was utilized on our site, and we have also purchased additional PPE and cleaning supplies at significant cost to the school.

Stakeholder Engagement

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

In the Summer of 2020, in preparation for the 2020/21 School Year and upcoming Learning Continuity and Attendance Plan, Rising Sun sent out a parent survey to seek stakeholder input regarding options for education in the Fall of 2020. The first option was distance learning for the first trimester with the option to reassess for site based learning beginning in the first week in November. A second option was for parents who, due to co-morbidity issues with a family member or student wished to select distance learning for the entire year, again with the option to change placement at the end of the first or second trimester. A third and final option was for parents who were in favor of site-based education for their children who attend Rising Sun. A School-wide reopening plan based on CDPH and EDCDPH was sent out to parents to preview and comment on and ask clarifying questions. These comments were addressed with follow up communication with parents and was approved by our board of directors on July 27th, 2020 at a Special Meeting. The survey results, which demonstrated over 60% of our school community wanting to return to site-based instruction was in large part due to the frustration parents had with having to schedule school time for their students and work time for themselves. There were also large numbers of parents who lost their jobs or whose jobs were at risk, and having their children distance learning and completing assignments at home was compounding stakeholder families' stress. Finally, parents wanted more options for distance learning other than the zoom meetings/lessons and packet pickup/downloads they received

last year. Parents often reflected how much they appreciated what Rising Sun was able to do in response to the sudden school closures, but they also noted that their children did not learn as much as they would have had site based options been available.

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

In the Summer of 2020, in preparation for the Learning Continuity and Attendance Plan, Rising Sun sent out a parent survey to discuss options for education in the Fall of 2020, including distance learning for one trimester with the option to reassess for site based learning beginning in the first week in November. A second option was for parents who, due to co-morbidity issues with a family member or student wished to select distance learning for the entire year, again with the option to change placement at the end of the first or second trimester. A final option was for parents who were in favor of site-based education for their children who attend Rising Sun.

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

The survey results, which demonstrated 60% of our school community wanting to return to site-based instruction was in large part due to the frustration parents had with having to schedule school time for their students and work time for themselves. 32% of parents chose distance learning for the first trimester only, and 8% chose distance learning for the entire year. All parents were thankful that they had the option of choosing what was best for their family.

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

Time - Organizing distance learning around site-based learning so students can interact with peers who are also working on materials and jobs. Teachers will live-stream their in-class lessons, explaining new concepts as well as follow up work with distance learners and peers together. The Time element also incorporates peer-to-peer "buddy systems" for students to work on a job together with one student who is site-based being paired with one student whose family has chosen distance learning.

Technology - Rising Sun has incorporated Google School and Google Classroom and Google meet to better accommodate distance learners. Our teachers are working collaboratively during our prep weeks to ensure all students (distance and site based) have access to their google classrooms. This measure is taken to ensure against learning loss in the event of a county or state wide Covid-19 related closure.

Training - Students, teachers and parent training options have been made available, especially for the parents of our youngest learners who have selected distance learning. We are also being pro-active with our site based training sessions in the event of further closures. Parents of our youngest (Transitional Kindergarten and Kindergarten) students will need the most support and training, and we have communicated as much to them in our training offerings. Teachers have met individually with students during the week of August 10th -14th to ensure a strong start to the year, and for parents of young students to have the confidence required to facilitate these lessons opportunities at home as well as have the tools to appropriately access the technology.

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.]

Rising Sun will offer site based learning to all parents who selected it for their students. We will follow state guidelines (Senate Bill 98) for student minutes of instruction for the 2020-21 school year. Students will still have recess and lunch time on campus and we will continue to provide meals to our FRM students. All class offerings will be the same for both our site based general education students and for our special education site based students.

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

Description	Total Funds	Contributing
Providing Site-based instruction with California Credentialed and Montessori Trained teachers - full time	561465	Yes
Providing Assistant Teachers who work individually with students while lead teachers provide lessons	217845	Yes
Additional training for staff to prepare for site-based learning safety	1000	Yes
Additional training for staff to prepare for migration to Google Classroom	1000	Yes
Purchasing of additional computers for site based students to collaborate with distance learning peers	5000	Yes
Additional utility expense to allow for appropriate climate control as well as maximum external airflow into the classrooms.	1550	Yes

Description	Total Funds	Contributing
Additional costs associated with deep cleaning the campus daily	3000	Yes
Additional costs associated with automated hand sanitizers located throughout the campus	500	Yes
Installation of plexiglass dividers for our office and our middle school classroom	1000	Yes

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.]

RSM implemented Google Classroom which allows for our distance learners to engage with their teachers and peers in real time lessons. Montessori methodology provides for small group lessons which often include manipulatives for new concepts as students move from the concrete to the abstract. While this element is impossible to duplicate during distance learning, our online students are able to observe the three part lesson with their peers, ask questions in real time and conduct their "follow up work" with their peers live. In addition, our students have one to one check ins with each teacher from 1:30 to 4:00 daily to ensure that any questions are addressed. Parents have the option of either picking up hard copies from the office, or downloading them from google classroom. Distance learning students are expected to attend each individual lesson and are encouraged to spend additional time on follow up work with their peers via a distance learning platform or chat program. Finally, each site based 4th - 8th grade student is paired with a distance learning "buddy" to ensure proper socialization and work completion.

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.]

A parent survey was conducted with all returning families to determine their needs last year. Given the low turnover, the transition to the 2020 school year was much easier and streamlined. Many parents who had used chrome books last year were able to pick them up again and were prepped for the start of the new year. New families were given a technology survey when they enrolled to determine needs for both when school started or in the event of a COVID related closure during the 2020-21 school year.

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.]

Given that each student in Montessori has an individualized work plan, each student is assessed at the beginning of the year as well as every 4-6 weeks from then on. Our 3rd through 8th grade students are assessed using the Renaissance Learning STAR Assessment which is computer based. Our TK-2nd grade students are assessed using a paper-pencil Albenisi Assessment, which is specific to Montessori Methodology. Our TK-2nd grade parents were offered a choice of "in person, site based" testing environment, 1:1 with their teachers after school and deep cleaning or as a take home option.

Individual work plans are then derived based on their results. From these assessments, small groups are assembled and these students work as a "cohort" whether distance or site based. Distance learners participate live during their individual lesson times with their peers who are learning the same concepts. Follow up work is then tailored to each student individually and may be accessed in hard copy or through Google classroom.

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.]

All staff were brought in for extra paid days to establish uniform policies and procedures around distance learning through Google Classroom. Mentor teachers were able to assist new teachers in setting up their classrooms and schedules. Additional technology such as tripods and HD cameras assisted in distance learners being able to view both the teacher and the materials as needed during lessons.

Staff Roles and Responsibilities

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

Our Educational Specialist is assigned to both site based and distance learners. Additional staff was hired to be on site to support our reading program in Special Education for the purposes of providing services to our site based population.

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.]

All students with IEPs and 504s underwent updated meetings during the closure, and again when school returned to ensure that the student's placement was noted appropriately and services were provided in a targeted manner related to services.

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

Description	Total Funds	Contributing
Purchasing of new chrome books to support distance learning students	3217	Yes

Description	Total Funds	Contributing
Additional paper and toner expense for hard copies of lessons and materials to distance learners	1000	Yes
Expanded staff hours for professional development .	4000	Yes
Extended staff hours for development for distance learning and site based learning.	4000	Yes
Additional technology hardware such as cameras and tripods	1500	Yes
Additional paper expense	750	Yes
Additional Special Education Staff to allow for a dedicated distance learning Special Education teacher	37085	Yes

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.]

In the summer of 2020, RSM established a targeted program for students who were at most risk for significant learning loss. For six weeks RSM provided a Summer Enrichment Program for three and a half hours per day. Students had the opportunity to socialize and learn with their peers and to shore up skills that were lost during the state-wide shutdown of schools.

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.]

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.]

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

Description	Total Funds	Contributing
Purchasing of standards based, research based electronic assessment tools for Math and Reading	3,000	Yes
Individualized work plans for each student	NA	Yes

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.]

Rising Sun recognizes the potential mental health concerns which arise as a result of school closures and social isolation with children, adolescents and adults. We also recognize the incredible stress that young families are under as they struggle with financial problems as a result of job losses due to the pandemic. There is also tremendous stress on parents who may not feel equipped to properly support their children's learning at home. Finally, there is the stress of having to work from home (if they are employed) while also facilitating access to online learning for their children. Supervision is very difficult for parents who are working from home due to limitations on their time, internet speed and frequent availability to their children. RSMS also understands that these stresses can become externalized toward spouses and children. This creates an environment which can vary from inconsistent and fearful all the way through to abuse and violence in the home.

There has been a significant uptick in reported domestic violence and child abuse charges as well as increased rates of addiction to drugs, alcohol and prescription drugs by adults since the onset of the pandemic. This is why RSMS has adopted a hybrid program offering parents the CHOICE between site-based and distance learning. The costs associated with this program are significant to the school and can add to the workload of our teachers and administrators and classified staff. However, RSMS understands that our mission and purpose is to provide a service to families that cannot be found in conventional public schools. The flexibility of our offerings allows parents the peace of mind that comes with the ability to choose the program which works best for their individual families. This is one of the primary ways we are supporting the mental health of our constituents. Another primary area of support is to have tremendous administrative support for our teaching staff. We have a Head of School, a Curriculum Coordinator, and two Montessori Mentors on hand to meet regularly with our classified and certificated staff. Our leadership team worked throughout the spring and summer to lay the groundwork for our teachers by providing them with scope, sequence and lesson plans for the first trimester. The Montessori methodology allows for individualized education for each student and each student arrived to school, whether on site or distance based, with a work plan already in place based on their individual scores from the prior year. RSMS also employs online assessments for students in grades three through eight to ensure that they are beginning at the individual levels which match their abilities. Rising Sun also hired additional support staff and teachers this year to ensure that the work-load was evenly distributed among all employees. This again is a costly model to run, however these measures all serve to support the mental health of our community of staff members. Rising Sun also added two "pupil free" workdays to the school. Finally, Rising Sun contracts with It Takes The Village for all mental health related supports for students. All lead teachers have also been trained in looking out for signs of depression among students in their classes as well as in signs of physical abuse.

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.]

Currently, 65% of all RSMS students are site based. This ranges from about 50% in Transitional Kindergarten/Kindergarten up to about 90% in middle school. Over the summer, RSMS communicated numerous times with all parents alerting them to the updates that were provided by state and county health and education officials. During this time, a dialogue was undertaken to seek input from parents for the 20-21 school year. The plan which we have implemented is a direct result of close coordination with county and state officials, our families and our staff. As a result, the clear majority of students have selected to be site based with a reduced schedule. This has resulted in increased school work at home (typically, RSMS does not provide students with homework until 6th grade) for all of our students. For our distance learners, teachers provide daily lessons which are individualized, as well as "follow up" time to check for understanding. Older distance learning students are also incorporated into the classroom with their peers throughout the day. They receive the same large group instruction and assignments as our site based learners. Work is distributed through Google Classroom or hard copies are made available for

parents who are unable to print and scan at home. Parents play an integral role in their education, and have shown strong support for this model of learning. All ELA students are tested with the ELPAC at both the beginning and the end of the year (initial and summative assessments) through either computer based or paper-pencil based assessments depending on their age and technology fluency. For some younger students, appropriate engagement requires parental support. If a student misses a lesson, a make up session is scheduled. RSMS has long used two separate student data systems. These SDS are Montessori Compass and PowerSchool. Montessori Compass is the primary school to home communication tool. This program has features which allow all classroom teachers to reach out to individual families, or an entire class, as well as to track attendance for both site based and distance learning. Student "enter" and "exit" times are logged using this tool as a means of measuring whether all students are meeting the established state standards for both site based and distance learning attendance. Additionally PowerSchool is also used to track additional demographic information as well as attendance so we have additional redundancy for tracking purposes. PowerSchool is also used for all state reporting through CALPADS. All teachers are trained in home to school communication expectations and standards. Parents receive daily communication through Montessori Compass from their students' teachers who in turn use Montessori Compass to respond. All emails are tracked and stored on a server. Should any learning concerns arise, RTI plans are communicated as well as all IEP notices. In addition, our office is tracking attendance and generating forms through PowerSchool whenever there is a missed day by a student. Letters are then sent out notifying parents of the attendance concerns and at five absences a parent-administration conference is scheduled.

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.]

All FRM qualifying families have been contacted regarding the meal options available here at school. At this time, we have about 12 students who qualify. All students bring their own lunch and snack, and the contents of their meals is also noted by teachers, especially in instances of our FRM qualifiers. Nutrition supplementation is always made available to all students through a classroom supply of pre-packaged snacks which meet the California State requirements for nutrition. We have contracted through Gold Star foods for other pre-packaged meals as well.

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

Section	Description	Total Funds	Contributing
Stakeholder Engagement	Parent Committee Events	1000	Yes
In-Person Instructional Offerings	Hiring of an additional, part time teacher in Middle School	37085	Yes
Distance Learning Program (Supports for Pupils with Unique Needs)	Hiring of an additional, part time reading specialist to work with all at-risk learners	37085	Yes
Distance Learning Program (Distance Learning Professional Development)	Two additional student free contracted days for teachers to support distance learning training	6400	Yes
In-Person Instructional Offerings	Purchasing of additional educational testing programs for student assessment as it relates to individualized work plans for students (Renaissance Learning)	1000	Yes
Distance Learning Program	Purchasing of additional educational testing programs for student assessment as it relates to individualized work plans for students (Renaissance Learning)	4164	
Distance Learning Program (Supports for Pupils with Unique Needs)	Purchasing new educational tests to ensure timely support of students with special needs (Woodcock Johnson)	1024	

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
3.93%	47052

Required Descriptions

[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.]

RSMS is, by its design an individualized educational experience for all students. By its very nature, Montessori education was created by Maria Montessori at Casa Bambino in Italy for students who were living on the streets or who had been dismissed from traditional schools. She demonstrated that when the child is empowered with the right tools, they can achieve more than any adult could plan for them. Each classroom is equipped with a Montessori Certified and California Credentialed teacher. In addition, each classroom also has a full time "Teaching Assistant" who is Montessori Trained. By our very structure we are built from the ground up to support our most vulnerable students. The most current data available suggests that RSMS has 0.8% foster youth, 1.6% English Learners, and 17.5% Low-Income Students. RSMS has purchased several additional laptop PCs and several additional Chrome Books to ensure that all students, particularly our most vulnerable students, have access to appropriate technology. Also, by offering a site-based program while 90% of all schools in California chose to offer only Distance Learning, we are offering educational protections that most distance learning programs cannot offer. These include but aren't limited to daily interaction with teachers and peers in a clean and appropriately spaced environment. All teachers and assistants are trained in RTI and what to look for when it comes to potential interventions. Administration established a highly successful RTI program for reading, math and behavior. This program requires all teachers to identify which students need additional intervention within the first six weeks of school starting. By week 12 tier one interventions are reviewed and adjustments are made. Should a child require Tier 2 interventions, parents are notified. After 18 weeks if a child is not off of RTI, they are referred to special education for a consult and a meeting with parents is scheduled. 504 and IEP options are discussed, as well as their rights under IDEA. 95% of all students are off RTI by week 18.

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

