

# Learning Continuity and Attendance Plan (2020–21)

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

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## General Information

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

Excelsior Charter Schools Corona Norco operates one, 7<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade school site in the city of Corona in Riverside County. The COVID-19 pandemic and the associated California Governor’s March 2020 distance learning mandate resulted in the closure of all Excelsior Charter School sites to on campus instruction from March 6, 2020 through the time that this document is being produced. The impact of the school site closures has been felt across every level of our organization. Student, parents, administrators, teachers, support staff, countywide partners, associated vendors, community college partners and the respective community stakeholders have had to undergo exhaustive measures to protect health and safety, continue instruction, provide social emotional support and modify our delivery methods. Each of the respective stakeholder groups have been challenged to shift their thinking, build resiliency, re-imagine their roles and relationships and find creative solutions to continue academic progress while protecting our individual/collective social emotional and physical well-being.

Even prior to the COVID pandemic and associated distance learning mandates Excelsior Charter Schools delivery model would be best described as a teaching and learning hybrid. As such, Excelsior Charter School students have always had the flexibility to choose any combination of on campus instruction, independent study, virtual, synchronous instruction and high school/college dual enrollment. Our Learning Management System and Student Information infrastructure has long since been able to support our instructional delivery platform that allows parents to fully understand their child’s academic progress, intervention needs, communicate with their teachers and allow educators to collaboratively provide input. Excelsior’s robust infrastructure and correlated staff expertise allowed our families to have an advantage when all schools were mandated to shift to off site support. Our families experienced very little disruption to our course content delivery. All course content classes were shifted to the virtual environment primarily transitioning from regular in-person full classrooms to the exact same student schedule delivered via Zoom video conferencing. Even prior to the on-campus restriction, like all schools Excelsior suspended athletics, student assemblies and any classes that we were advised by the county Departments of Public Health to suspend because of amplified infection risks (band, dance, choir). Excelsior uses the Canvas Learning Management System which is the identical system used by 114 of the 115 California Community Colleges. As such, in addition to being able to continue the middle school and high school curricular support our dually enrolled students were also familiar with the system that was used by the respective community college that they attended. Even further, Excelsior uses a common curriculum and assessment model across all school sites. As such, the burden to create emergency lesson plans with the appropriate scope and sequence was not experienced by Excelsior Corona teaching and support staff. Since all Excelsior students receive an electronic instructional support device (iPad or Chromebook) at enrollment, our students had

very little disruption associated with not being able to access the content as the virtual-only shift took place. The byproduct of Excelsior's operational design resulted in 96.17% continued student participation as identified by our year end, June 2020 Canvas student participation data.

The result was that families began to flock to Excelsior Charter Schools as parent/student word of mouth, media coverage and regional educational leaders celebrated the continued, robust support that Excelsior provided in the midst of the worldwide pandemic. As parents struggled with their new role of being the primary educator Excelsior Charter Schools became even more attractive and our campuses began to grow faster. Passed on August 31, 2020, Senate Bill 820 dealt a damaging blow to Excelsior Charter Schools and parent choice overall. Senate Bill 820 penalized schools with increasing enrollment that are funded as non-classroom based by not providing funding for newly enrolled students. The result is that for the first time in Excelsior's 26-year existence we were forced to temporarily suspend new enrollments at 3 of our seven campuses. From the March 6, 2020 California Governor's Stay Home order to September 2, 2020 Excelsior Charter Schools had 281 newly enrolled students. Excelsior Charter Schools was further penalized because the California Department of Education capped Spring 2019/2020 student enrollment at the February 29, 2020 enrollment number while Excelsior Charter Schools continued to grow through the historical end of Second Principal Apportionment (P2). The Excelsior Corona campus continues to experience weekly new enrollments.

## Stakeholder Engagement

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

To fully engage our stakeholders beginning in March of 2020 Excelsior Charter Schools solicited and promoted stakeholder feedback and engagement through a series of site meetings, Zoom meetings, surveys, phone calls, public meetings, social media posts, parent and community notifications. Our intent was to fully understand our stakeholder needs and communicate our plans to continue the education of students while taking significant measures to protect the health and safety of all stakeholders. This document is the direct byproduct of the input of each stakeholder group and fully memorializes all educational, social emotional and support efforts that have taken place due to the COVID-19 related restrictions.

The first Staff, Parent, Student surveys were administered in March of 2020. A second survey was administered between May 2020 through the end of June 2020. A third survey was administered July 2020 through September 11, 2020.

School site public principal meetings were held on March 16, 2020, April 20, 2020, June 15, 2020, and September 14, 2020 to obtain additional stakeholder input.

The modifications captured in this document were discussed at the Excelsior Charter Schools Corona Norco public board meetings held on March 12, 2020, June 18, 2020 and September 10, 2020. The public hearing is scheduled to take place on September 22, 2020 at a special public board meeting. This complete document draft is available for stakeholder review as part of the September 22, 2020 special public board meeting agenda package. This document is also available for review on the Excelsior Charter School website. [excelsior.com/corona/meeting-dates](https://excelsior.com/corona/meeting-dates).

Stakeholders without internet access were informed via telephone that a copy could be mailed to them directly. The translation feature available on Excelsior's Corona website allows all website communications to be translated into the language directly suited to the reader.

For Excelsior's Free or Reduced Lunch qualifying families, McKinney-Vento, Foster Youth or any family that expressed an immediate need a hotspot was provided to support internet connectivity.

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

Beginning in July of 2019 all Excelsior Charter School Corona Norco public board meetings are broadcasted via a live internet feed. From March 2020 to the present all school site informational meetings have been held using Zoom video conferencing. Families are able to participate in the meetings with a video connection or solely by using a telephone to dial in. Stakeholder participation is encouraged by posting meeting dates/times on our website, social media platforms and auto call reminders. Community comments are accepted via the live chat box, direct live synchronous access during the meetings and email.

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

Our written and verbal stakeholder feedback has been encouraging. The majority of the stakeholder feedback expressed understanding that the primary driver for our operational decisions beginning March of 2020 to the present has been directly related to COVID-19. In the latest survey 65.31% of Excelsior Parents desired to have their students return to on-campus classes with the expressed increased safety protocols. All stakeholder groups expressed that Excelsior had done a very good job of continuing to support student education and provide information on all key decisions. The overwhelmingly positive comments provided a strong correlation with our stakeholder sentiment and surge in recent student enrollment. Parent and student stakeholders did express some frustration with dual enrollment internet access at the beginning of the college course offering. All college-student course connectivity issues have been resolved.

All stakeholder groups suggested that student social-emotional wellness be an included top priority. 22.08% of responding Excelsior families speak a language other than English in the home. 2.6% qualify as homeless under the McKinney-Vento Act. 34.69% have experienced significant financial difficulty related to the COVID-19 pandemic. 7.62% do not have reliable internet access in their home. 15.03% receive Special Education Services.

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

The following aspects of Excelsior Learning Continuity and Attendance Plan were influenced by specific stakeholder input:

- Purchase of Personal Protective Equipment for all staff and students. (New Cintas agreement).
- Inclusion of wall-mounted thermometers at the campus.
- Transition to Docusign electronic document system for enrollment, IEPs and staff documents.
- Centralizing enrollments for all campuses.
- Garnering authorization for the Seamless Summer Option for the National School Lunch Program.
- Adoption of the "Eagles Nest" social-emotional virtual space.
- Telework accommodation availability for staff members.

- Purchase of new iPads and Chromebooks.
- Staff professional development on Using Zoom, virtual student engagement, Aeries communication.
- Renewal of Gaggle-virtual student and school safety solutions.
- Partnership with Young Visionaries and Family and Kids Foundation to conduct a 500-Family support event. (The support event provides groceries, household goods, clothing, school supplies, etc.).
- Purchase of laptops for Counseling services
- Increase to weekly parent meetings.
- Translation of all communications in Spanish.
- Tiny Eye Counseling solutions contract.
- Purchase of hot spots for families with unreliable internet connectivity.
- Modified contactless Monday – Friday lunch service.
- Projected grade level phased return of students beginning with Students with Disabilities, Special populations and younger grades.
- Planned development of increased Moderate-Severe student instructional supports.
- Recalibration of Fulltime equivalent staffing model.
- Allowance of staff to request furniture check out to support at-home instructional delivery.
- Modified work schedules.
- Centralized mailing of report cards and parent notifications.
- Contract renewal with Revolution Foods and School Food Solutions to support National School Lunch Program.
- COVID-19 training for all staff.
- Professional Development on student and staff mental health first aid.
- Contact tracing training for Human Resources and Student/Educational Services.
- Temporary suspension of new enrollments at 3 Excelsior school sites.
- Purchase of headsets for teachers to support instruction.
- Administrator Professional Development on supporting Students with Disabilities via distance learning.
- Virtual Self-health safety check.
- Cohort messaging system to lessen person to person staff contact.
- Weekly staff Zoom meetings.
- Continuance of Career Technical Education and College Dual Enrollment
- Professional Development on Learning Acceleration versus remediation.
- Heavily modified campus visitation policies.
- Modified ingress and egress at Excelsior Corona campus upon return to lessen the likelihood of infection spread.

# 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.]

The Excelsior Corona campus has clearly identified 6ft social distancing markers. Clear plastic partitions have been purchased for student desks to limit the likelihood of accidental spread of disease should an individual be an asymptomatic carrier of COVID-19. Students will be returned to campus in a phased in approach with Students with Disabilities, McKinney-Vento, Foster Youth and low-income families being first to return along with 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students. The intent is to return approximately 25%-30% of the students to campus once in-person instruction is allowed.

Students at all grade levels were given formative assessments in English and Mathematics upon the return for the 2020/2021 school year. Our goal is to assess whether or not students have experienced learning loss. Additionally, Excelsior Charter Schools has taken steps to ensure that all students (both returning and newly enrolled) were afforded the protections under the State Superintendent of Public Instruction's Spring 2019/2020 Hold Harmless grading mandate issued to all California schools.

Students enrolled at Excelsior for the Spring 2019/2020 semester had very similar curricular and instructional support during the Stay Home Order. All core courses were provided live via the Zoom platform during the same time period as their on-campus course offerings. Work submissions and assessments were all completed along a similar schedule using our Canvas LMS. Our goal during the pandemic was to make the transition off of campus and the eventual re-engagement as seamless as possible by not operationalizing major shifts to how instruction is provided, work submitted, students are supported and course offering times. Excelsior's hybrid model has been particularly successful in continuing to support students whether they are on or off of our campuses.

To support newly enrolled students or students that had experienced learning loss Excelsior reconstituted its Apex curricular offerings. Apex provides expanded opportunities for students to accelerate their learning to recapture foundational information loss during the Spring 2019/2020 semester while staying on pace with Fall 2020/2021. All Excelsior campuses identified teaching staff that will directly support students that had experienced learning loss as identified by the Fall 2020/2021 Math and ELA formative assessments and the English Language Proficiency Assessment for California (ELPAC) annual summative assessment.

Excelsior site Administration, the Assistant Superintendents of Student/Educational Services, the Assistant Superintendent of Administrative Services and the Facilities Manager have conducted joint site inspections to ensure the readiness of the Excelsior Corona campus to accept students when allowed.

Excelsior Charter Schools will continue to employ the Gaggle student/campus safety monitoring service on all devices and platforms to best understand the mental health and disposition of our students and the safety of our campuses. Additionally, Excelsior will continue to employ Tiny Eye counseling services, the support of our local SELPAs and county partnerships to provide continued mental health support for our students.

Excelsior also has key supports within the benefits packages to support the mental health and self-care of our staff. Further, Excelsior staff meetings now all include some aspect of mental health well-being.

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

Description	Total Funds	Contributing
Personal Protection Equipment (masks, faceshields, gloves, thermometers, desk shields)	\$3,117	N
Cleaning Supplies and Equipment	\$3,402	N

## **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.]

Excelsior Charter Schools normal hybrid instructional model offers a blend of in person instruction, distance learning and college dual enrollment. As such, Excelsior’s Learning Management and Student Information systems were fully prepared for the shift to 100% distance learning. Even prior to the pandemic, Excelsior utilizes a common curriculum and assessment model across all 7 campuses. Excelsior’s response to the 100% distance learning mandate was merely to shift all instructional offerings and supports to it’s previously used distance learning platforms. Zoom web conferencing was the system of choice to transfer in class teacher instruction to virtual, synchronous live daily instruction. As such, the students from grade 7 through grade 12 were offered the exact same courses during the exact same Tuesday through Friday instructional times. As usual, Excelsior’s Monday curriculum, assessments and supports continued to be delivered via distance learning which is supported by the Canvas Learning Management system. Excelsior’s curriculum is in part internally developed and partly contracted. The shift to off campus support required modifications to the course offerings, assessments and curriculum in choir, dance, band and classroom-based laboratories. Under the direction of the CIF all athletics were cancelled or postponed.

To ensure our continued progress toward the regional workforce goals all Career Technical Education courses have been continued. Specifically, the 4-tiered Cybeseurity course offering which has always been provided via synchronous live instruction continued with zero disruption. Additionally, Excelsior Corona continues to provide robust E-sports offerings and competitions with little COVID-19 related disruption.

Special attention was paid to the virtual course offerings by clustering the course placement for students with disabilities, English Learners and students that had demonstrated a loss of learning in the Spring 2019/2020 semester. Special education and educational support personnel were added as additional staff to these respective classes to be able to better support the students and teacher. In addition, weekly tutoring sessions were scheduled and marketed to offer increased instructional time as needed.

Excelsior's special education department collaborated with the general education teachers to appropriately modify the coursework and ensure the accommodations and supports were being met for students with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs). Excelsior Corona Special Education teachers further collaborate with General Education teachers by coteaching in virtual classes as needed.

## 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.]

In 3 separate stakeholder surveys sent to students and parents the questions were explicitly asked, "Do you have reliable internet service in your home?" and "If needed, do you (your student) have an Excelsior provided digital device to access instruction virtually?" In addition, each Excelsior student is assigned a credentialed Teacher/Facilitator to serve as their advocate and the families primary first point of contact. Each Facilitator surveyed their respective student cohorts during the Spring 2019/2020 semester. The Facilitators also surveyed their families before the start of the fall semester and during the opening weeks of the school year concerning access to reliable internet and electronic devices. All Excelsior students are issued an iPad or Chromebook at enrollment so access to electronic devices was not an issue for Excelsior students. During the early months of the stay home order Comcast and Spectrum offered low cost internet for low income families. Excelsior marketed this program and assisted each family as appropriate. In the months near the end of the school year the low cost connectivity offer was no longer available. Families lacking reliable internet connectivity once the offer ended were fully supported by Excelsior directly. Excelsior Charter Schools provided either a hotspot or an internet capable electronic device to enable students to attend all virtual courses if their home lacked reliable internet.

**Professional Development:** PD was provided to all Excelsior Teaching/Facilitation and support staff to enable them to troubleshoot minor student connection issues. For connectivity concerns that required direct IT support a ticket system was used to support the families and staff. Nearly all escalated tickets were resolved within 1 business day.

During the week prior to the cessation of on campus instruction Excelsior IT staff conducted a training for all Excelsior staff to better understand potential concerns with connectivity and potential issues accessing the LMS and SIS. Each week for the first 3 weeks follow up training was conducted. Each day during the first 2 weeks IT staff set aside times to be able to troubleshoot and support any connectivity issue.

## 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.]

Excelsior intentionally focuses resources to ensure the academic progress, safety, social/emotional well-being and access to high quality instruction and technology for our Special Education population, English Learners, McKinney-Vento, Foster Youth, students with exceptional needs and low-income students.

Excelsior's goal is for 100% of our students to have daily participation and daily/frequent live interaction that includes a credentialed teacher and other students. Ensuring that the required number of instructional minutes is met is done via a combination of daily attendance taken in the live virtual classes, daily work submission via the Canvas Learning Management System and live student participation in the "Eagles Nest" student gatherings. The weekly attendance record requirement is captured by the Aeries Student Information System. Any student marked "absent" from the daily class will receive an automated call home informing the parent of the period missed. Parents can follow up by logging into the Aeries portal to see what classes their child attended for the day/week.

The time value of asynchronous and synchronous student work is determined and certified by the credentialed teacher supporting the class, providing feedback, scoring the assignments and issuing the course grade. Pupil progress is determined by formative and summative assessments, checking for understanding during live interaction, assignment submission outcomes and monthly Education Team Meetings (parent/teacher/student conferences) inputs.

### **Student schedules (Live Interaction):**

All 7<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grade students have a varied combination of classes/workshops, distance learning/independent study courses and college/CTE courses.

- Live instruction is conducted using Zoom video conferencing.
- Tuesday through Friday classes/workshops are 55 minutes long mirroring the exact configuration and time of day as offered during the normal on campus class.
- "Eagles Nest" tutoring and support offerings are available daily and are 30 minutes in length.
- Additional teacher supported tutoring sessions – all tutoring sessions are available to any Excelsior student without regard for the location of their normal school of residence.

### **Asynchronous support**

- Prior to the mandated Stay Home order Excelsior curriculum included video tutorials to assist students and extend the instructional time. The videos are tailored specifically to provide assistance with the assignments associated with each course.
- Excelsior credentialed staff regularly provide recorded supplemental supports to assist students with knowledge acquisition.
- A percentage of the formative assessments are auto scored to allow the student to work ahead and receive feedback during non-instructional times.
- Teacher feedback is provided through the Canvas LMS portal to allow students to best understand their progress and for teachers to better monitor the overall progress of the entire class to determine if reteaching is necessary for a particular instructional strand.

### **Emphasis on Students with Disabilities, English Learners and low-income households**

- Excelsior continued to conduct all IEPs during the entire distance learning mandate period.
- To encourage live participation all students were trained on how to include a virtual background to protect their privacy and to limit any potential anxiety associated with displaying a home environment that is visually associated with having limited income/resources.
- English Learner students are grouped in virtual classes to pair students of varying English language development together.

- Facilitators/Teachers that speak the student's home language are intentionally paired in order to better engage the parents in the student's education.
- Translation services are available for any family that expresses the need for dual language support.
- Students identified as Foster Youth or McKinney-Vento as identified as such in the Aeries SIS. The assigned Facilitators and Teachers are fully trained on the additional resource supports and well as how to casually make the determination that a student now qualifies as McKinney-Vento due to a communicated change resulting in instability of a regular, adequate nighttime residence.

## 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.]

To fully support our transition to 100% distance learning prior to the transition synchronous (live) and asynchronous (recorded) Zoom tutorials were offered to all Excelsior Teacher and Educational support staff. Additional professional development was offered to retrain teaching staff on how to modify course curriculum as appropriate and provide individual or group feedback in the Canvas LMS. The Zoom courses provided were:

- Getting Started with Zoom: Setup in advance of the instruction
- Zoom Phone User training
- Joining a Meeting
- Scheduling Zoom meetings with Outlook
- Meeting Controls
- Assigning privileges
- Breakout Rooms
- Closed Captioning
- Video Sharing
- Virtual Backgrounds
- Recording Zoom sessions
- Engagement features (chat, polling, reactions, etc).

In addition, the teaching and teaching support staff were trained on proper Zoom etiquette and engaging students in the virtual environment. During our weekly Zoom staff meetings virtual best practices are modeled which include instructional aids along with wellness exercises. Support staff were provided access to the teaching staff professional development but were also trained on:

- Customer Service in a 100% distance learning environment.
- Supporting the classroom teacher during virtual instruction.

Excelsior staff was also provided the appropriate technology to fully teach in the virtual environment from their home residence. The provided technology included the following based on the staff member's need:

- Laptop
- Headphones
- Camera
- Hotspot
- Chair
- Printer

## Staff Roles and Responsibilities

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

Transitioning to 100% distance learning required a significant recalibration of teacher and support staff caseloads in order to balance the full-time equivalency while providing student support that is very similar to in-person instruction. The primary change is to amplify the delivery in order to maintain student engagement and allow for sufficient time to provide every student with robust feedback on submitted assignments. Since the majority of Excelsior curriculum is centrally provided most lesson planning is review and preparation for delivery via the virtual classroom. Classroom management is now replaced with being able to fully engage a teenage student with the competition of household distractions without the benefit of proximity, seating discretion and peripheral, visual observation. Excelsior teaching staff encourages all students to adhere to proper videoconferencing etiquette, utilize their cameras and employ virtual backgrounds for privacy while regularly checking for understanding via the use of the polling feature, chat box, interaction or calling on a student directly. Excelsior administration fully understands that we are requesting that our teachers provide this robust support to Excelsior students while potentially having school aged children of their own that require intervention and support as they are also learning virtually. With this in mind we ask that our teaching staff show an appropriate level of grace if students aren't perfectly engaged and to be reminded that many of our student's home environments are not well suited for virtual learning. Additionally, a high level of anxiety may exist with our students as isolation can translate into social emotional imbalances that block learning. The collaborative role of our classroom Teachers and our credentialed Facilitators is even more critical in distance learning in order to leverage the direct relationship between the student and their assigned Facilitator to best understand how we can re-engage a distracted student.

All Excelsior staff including support staff were offered the accommodation to telework. Appropriate protocols have been taken to safeguard student and staff information by disallowing Personally Identifiable Information to be taken to the home. A meeting is conducted with the inclusion of Human Resources, the staff member and their direct supervisor to communicate the expectations and any triggers to return all work based functions to the regular onsite workspaces.

Special Education staff are actively supporting the virtual classrooms and ensuring that the appropriate accommodations for our Students with Disabilities are being met. Excelsior is further using this opportunity to refine our co-teaching capacities to not only improve our support for our Special Education students but also to benefit our General Education students as key scaffolded information is emphasized for the entire class.

Bilingual support staff have also been deployed to better support our English Learners in the virtual classrooms. Bilingual staff assist by promoting communication between students/families and teachers, support small group instruction by supporting specific linguistic and academic deficits. Excelsior is continuing to refine our EL support processes by scheduling training on front loading and reteaching strategies.

## 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.]

### Special Education

All accommodations expressed in the student's Individualized Education Plan are being continued with the health and safety modification of the assessments and meetings being held virtually. The following steps have been taken to support our Students with Disabilities:

- Excelsior has extended the technological supports to all contracted, non-Excelsior experts that are supporting the student's needs.
- The caseloads of Special Education teachers have been greatly reduced to account for the extended time requirement to support the students virtually.
- Special Education teachers provide daily support for their student's synchronous and asynchronous instruction.
- Ongoing collaboration between Special Education and General Education support staff has been simplified by automating a feature in Aeries that allows the Special Education teacher to provide input assignments, reflections on virtual classroom observations, reminders and suggestions.
- Special Education teachers can offer suggestions on manipulatives and print materials that better align with the individual student's learning needs.
- All personnel are available to collaborate video videoconferencing to discuss goals, supports, accommodations, services and informal assessment measures.
- Any technological or instructional devices identified in the IEP is provided to the student.
- Weekly small group instruction is provided by the Special Education and Teaching staff.
- Students with Disabilities are encouraged to participate in the Career Technical Education offerings.

### McKinney-Vento, Foster Youth and Low-Income Students

- Extended hours offered where appropriate for educational team meetings.
- Parent pick up allowed for National School Lunch Program.
- Seamless Summer Option utilized to provide nutritional support for any school aged child during the lunch service.
- Support with school supplies.

- Support with personal hygiene products.
- Targeted resource support with “Pull Up and Pick Up” events that support 500 local families. Event held or scheduled for each of the seven Excelsior school sites.
- Delivery of electronic devices or support materials as needed.
- Special circumstance- \$500 shopping spree support for McKinney-Vento family that experienced a total loss due to fire.
- Staff training on McKinney-Vento identification and supports.
- Website postings for local jobs.
- Targeted FAFSA/College application support for Foster Youth, McKinney-Vento and low-income families.

## English Learners

The Fall 2020 Distance Learning reopening mandate provided a unique opportunity for Excelsior to improve our virtual English Language Development (ELD) support. Further we want to ensure that our English Learner (EL) students acquire content knowledge and language acquisition simultaneously even while receiving instruction 100% virtually. The California Department of Education and the State Board of Education mandate that English Language Development be fully integrated to support the academic and linguistic goals for every English Learner. Our virtual instruction direction is guided by the following CDE mandate:

English learners at all English proficiency levels and at all ages require **both** Integrated ELD **and** specialized attention to their particular language learning needs, or Designated ELD.

**Designated ELD** is defined as instruction provided during a time during the regular school day for focused instruction on the state-adopted ELD standards to assist English learners to develop critical English language skills necessary for academic content learning in English. (*California Code of Regulations, Title 5 [5 CCR] Section 11300[a]*). Restated, Designated ELD support is specific, protected and targeted support for EL students that happens during regular instructional/support times.

Designated ELD Goal: The overall goal of ELD instruction is for students to learn English at the level of a native speaker. In school settings, ELD instruction focuses on English Learners developing the language skills needed to learn content taught in English and to be able to express their content knowledge in English.

**Integrated ELD** is defined as instruction in which the state-adopted ELD standards are used in tandem with the state-adopted academic content standards. Integrated ELD includes specifically designed academic instruction in English. (*5 CCR Section 11300[c]*). Restated, Integrated ELD is support provided as part of the regular general education instruction.

Integrated ELD Goal: to learn the content and academic language used in each lesson. Learning Objectives for integrated ELD lessons come directly from the content standards of the lesson being taught, such as English Language Arts, Mathematics, History Social Science, and Science.

In our virtual environment Excelsior employs the following Designated and Integrated ELD as part of our Tier 1 academic supports:

Integrated ELD	Designated ELD
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Workshop Teacher/Facilitator clarifies the language used while prompting for textual evidence to support inferences.	Workshop Teacher/Facilitator helps students examine author's use of verbs to convey how a character is feeling.
Workshop Teacher/Facilitator helps students summarize informational text such as in a science class.	Workshop Teacher/Facilitator helps students analyze complex sentences from the text.
Workshop Teacher/Facilitator guides students in researching and writing reports.	Workshop Teacher/Facilitator helps Els identify words and phrases that create cohesion in the text that they have read.
Group students in breakout groups by pairing students by their language proficiency (Emerging, Expanding or Bridging).	Workshop Teachers/Facilitators and Zoom class paired Support Staff help Els analyze language patterns and help students unpack sentences and understand words that take new noun forms that exist within the text.
Intentionally pair EL students with Facilitators that are fluent in the language represented on the student's Home Language Survey.	Communicate available ELD support to parents during Educational Team Meetings. Communicate the dual goals of grade level content knowledge and language acquisition to parent and student.
Focus on the language needs of Els during instruction by contextualizing complex words and ideas with previously acquired knowledge.	Scheduled Individual or peer group tutoring sessions that include Els of all proficiency levels (Emerging, Expanding or Bridging).
Increase the Educational Team meeting frequency as appropriate to fully accommodate the needs of the EL student and their family.	Provide parent communications in English and the additional language represented on the Home Language Survey. Teach parents and students how to use the translate function on the Excelsior website. Have Aeries messages translated as appropriate. Teach parent and EL how to use web-based, free translation supports.

In addition to the current ELD supports identified Excelsior Charter Schools is planning the following professional development for teachers, support staff and families to improve our distance learning outcomes:

- Effectively Implementing Choice Boards via Distance Learning.
- Distance Learning: Integrated and Designated ELD Guidance.
- EL Engagement Strategy for Distance Learning: Sentence Auction
- EL Engagement Strategy for Distance Learning: Short Talks
- EL Engagement Strategy for Distance Learning: Running Dictation
- Supporting EIs: 4 Principals for a Strong Start to the School Year via Distance Learning

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

Description	Total Funds	Contributing
Information Technology upgrades: device purchases, DocuSign, hot spots, Upgraded Zoom licenses for staff	\$56,342	Y
Personal Protection Equipment, Sanitation Services, signage, partitions	\$3,117	N
Increased Staffing, PARs, Professional Development	\$4,515	Y
Family Resource Support events	\$1,118	Y
English Learner support services, staff, programs and resources	\$1,230	Y
Foster Youth support, staff, programs and resources	\$1,500	Y
Special Education support, staff, programs and resources	\$27,340	Y

### **Pupil Learning Loss**

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

The trauma associated with the COVID-19 stress and prolonged isolation made it imperative that the early student/family Fall 2020/2021 contacts include intentional efforts to best understand the student’s mental state. Staff needed to determine the student’s coping strategies, home environment, socialization, familial impact of COVID-19 and mindset with regard to academic progress while still being in a 100% distance learning environment for an undetermined period of time. Due to our operational design which has always included a distance learning component and an infrastructure directly suited to provide 100% distance learning if needed, the initial negative academic impact of the COVID-19 Stay Home order was blunted for Excelsior students who had been previously enrolled. Our Canvas Learning Management System data identified that student participation rates held strong at 96.17% just prior to the June 2019/2020 end of the school year.

Equally important to student readiness and mental well-being is collective teacher confidence to identify and close knowledge gaps in a 100% distance learning environment. Initial Fall 2020 staff training and ongoing professional development must be calibrated to improve collective

teacher self-efficacy when staff communicate that they feel ill prepared to provide learning acceleration without the benefit of in-person instruction. The only allowable exception is to provide support for small cohorts of Special Education students. The August 2020 to September 11, 2020 survey results demonstrate that Excelsior staff feels anxiety largely around the issues of:

- Student engagement for students that live in highly dysfunctional homes.
- Student engagement and participation with home-based distractions.
- Limited ability to provide social/emotional support while students are isolated
- Staff collaboration while operating in their homes.

While teaching and support staff expressed concerns associated with student engagement and social/emotional support the staff overwhelmingly feel confident in the Excelsior systems that are designed to assess readiness levels in Mathematics, English Language Arts and English Language Proficiency. The results of the student survey indicate that Excelsior staff should be equally confident that their relationships and communication with our students will be a huge benefit to closing any pupil learning loss. The results of the September 2020 Student survey clearly indicate that Excelsior students feel that they are well supported academically and social/emotionally while also being well informed regarding changes.

The collective decision by Excelsior leadership is to formally assess all students to determine academic readiness and any pupil learning loss specifically in Mathematics, English Language Arts and English Language Development were appropriate. All Excelsior sites will utilize the assessment features in Renaissance Math for mathematics and Reading Plus for English Language Arts. All EL students are identified as such in our SIS and LMS and receive additional instructional supports as part of Excelsior's delivery model. In addition to the formal assessments identified initial formative assessments, teacher observation and grading of assignments will also be used to determine what if any pupil learning loss has occurred.

## **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.]

The most immediate and direct pupil learning loss strategy is to ensure that all students are attending and actively engaged (participating) in the live virtual and asynchronous class offerings. All Excelsior students have the benefit of participating in virtual instruction at differing campuses where space is available. Excelsior teachers have access to the Aeries SIS for the weekly/daily attendance record, Canvas and Zoom for a daily/frequent live participation record. To accelerate learning and mitigate any learning loss all Excelsior students have access to the Apex curriculum which is tailored and guided by specific Excelsior site teachers and allows students to work at their own pace. The Apex platform includes diagnostic tools that allow Excelsior teachers to guide the students through practice skills with the additional benefit of having educational video clips for self-paced reteaching as needed.

All Excelsior assessment tools have frequent and regular assessments cycles (quizzes, tests, extended response requirements) to aid the teaching staff in better understanding the student's readiness levels and knowledge gaps.

Specific to addressing learning loss for English Learners, Low-income, Foster Youth, Pupils with Exceptional needs and McKinney-Vento students, targeted supplementary tutoring opportunities are available on a daily/weekly basis. Students in these categories are surveyed to ensure that they receive free nutritional services, have access to a digital device and a supplemented with a digital hot spot if needed. Additionally, where appropriate, Student Support Teams (SSTs) can be convened by any classroom teacher or assigned Facilitator to develop a plan in partnership with the student and parent to improve performance and prepare for the college, military or workforce transition for any pupil with an exceptional need. Historically, Excelsior has utilized student support groups identified as “McKinney-Vento/Foster Youth breakfast huddles” to provide a safe haven for McKinney-Vento and Foster Youth. These students established study groups, received information on financial supports, scholarships, college admission and free tutoring. Excelsior plans to re-establish as the McKinney-Vento/Foster Youth virtual huddles to establish small learning communities amongst students with similar backgrounds. The most recent meeting was held in June of 2020. English Learner support is now supplemented by the inclusion of bilingual staff in the virtual teaching environments. These bilingual staff members will undergo continual professional development targeted specifically to address any pupil learning loss with EL students. The designated EL support strategy of pairing EL students of different language proficiency within the virtual classes will continue to be used as a means to address pupil learning loss for ELs. Excelsior will continue to invest in instructional supports that improve English Language proficiency.

**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.]

The effectiveness of the services and supports meant to address pupil learning loss is measured by student performance. The outcomes of our internal assessments, diagnostic tools, California Dashboard results and state interim assessments as compared to our historical achievement data will inform the overall status of our student progress.

Excelsior Charter Schools employs Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) comprised of content specialist teachers from across all school sites. With the assistance and support from our site administrators the PLCs will continually reflect on the performance data, identify focus strands, share best practices and celebrate growth. Site administrators will support our students and teaching staff through classroom observations ensuring that the agreed upon strategies are being implemented across the Excelsior system. Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS) is used as the framework to guide the PLCs to always use scientifically validated interventions whenever possible, use data in decision making and monitor student progress as they meet monthly to discuss outcomes and implementations.

Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) is used at some Excelsior school sites as a professional development package to align the performance goals, provide targeted PD and improve the college-going campus culture. An increase/maintenance in the college-going rate amongst students that had previously experienced a COVID-19 related learning loss as compared to the cohorts from previous years is another effective measure of whether a support strategy has been effective.

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

Description	Total Funds	Contributing
PBIS professional development	\$500	Y

Description	Total Funds	Contributing
PARs for PLC collaboration	\$500	Y
APEX Curriculum	\$1,570	Y
Special Education contracted services	\$3,235	Y
Canvas Learning Management System course development	\$3,250	Y
Cost of McKinney-Vento/Foster Youth targeted supports	\$2,350	Y
English Language Development professional development	\$500	Y

## Mental Health and Social and Emotional Well-Being

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

The mental health and social/emotional well-being of our students, staff and families is at the forefront of our readiness efforts to assist students with academic performance and their overall health during the COVID-19 pandemic. The added stresses and isolation brought on by the Stay Home order paired with the fact that the homes of many of our students are not well suited for learning as opposed to the comfort of receiving instruction in a traditional classroom. From the March 2020 onset of the Stay Home order through the planned 2020/2021 school year Excelsior Charter Schools has provided the following supports or intends to provide the planned training/opportunity:

### Students

- Employ Gaggle student monitoring services to monitor the communications of all students on any Excelsior device or platform.
- Planned PD for all staff on Student Wellness First Aid.
- Virtual social rooms for English Learners
- Targeted virtual PD to support McKinney-Vento and Foster Youth during the pandemic.
- Weekly Student led/Administrator attended student virtual gatherings hosted by Excelsior Student Board member from the onset of the Stay Home order through the end of the 2019/2020 school year.
- Student access to Tiny Eye Counseling services.
- Reminders of Suicide and Violence Prevention Hotline numbers on website.
- Mindfulness activities for students led by ASB students
- Continuance of ASB activities during the Stay Home order such as Spirit Week.
- E-Sports gatherings and promotions for Students across the Excelsior system to participate in as part of the weekly “Eagles Nest” activities.

- Tuesday through Friday virtual “Eagles Nest” activities.
- “Ice Breaker” activities during virtual social gatherings led the ASB.
- Staff training on Trauma Informed Best Practices

### **Excelsior Staff**

- Wellness activities included as part of virtual staff training.
- Virtual HealthCheck daily self-monitoring reporting.
- Creation of Message Teams to allow staff members to collaborate virtually.
- Telework accommodation availability for all staff.
- Counseling availability through benefits package.
- Email communication sent to all staff highlighting free county Behavioral Health supports.
- Ongoing communications from the Human Resources department on free webinars and discussions on mental health strategies.

The underlying intent of all mental health and social/emotional well-being efforts is to help build resiliency in our students and staff by providing training and/or activities designed to either relieve stress or develop coping strategies. Excelsior’s intent is to continue to express compassion for all stakeholders in this environment and stay alert to the immediate and secondary traumas brought on by the COVID-19 related isolation and fatigue. During all Leadership meetings mental health, wellness and self-care is discussed, best practices are shared and new strategies are deployed throughout our system.

## **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.]

Excelsior’s distance learning supports (daily Zoom classes, Eagles Nest Meetings, electronic work submission and feedback) and platforms (Aeries, Zoom, Canvas, telephone calls and emails) have the benefit of providing multiple daily opportunities for students to have daily live interaction and participation. On August 19, 2020 Excelsior administration met to discuss and develop the following tiered reengagement strategies:

### **Multi-tiered Student Re-engagement Policy as part of the Excelsior Learning Continuity and Attendance Plan**

California Compulsory education continues to apply for the 2020/2021 school year. The intent of the California Legislature is for all schools to develop a different multi-tiered system of re-engagement for students who miss instruction or who are chronically absent in distance learning rather than the system used during our normal school environment. As an Independent Study school with a hybrid inclusion of classroom-supported workshops, Excelsior’s normal process of capturing daily attendance is through daily student assignment submission. All

assignments are submitted through our Canvas Learning Management System. While on mandated 100% distance learning, we will continue to capture student daily assignment submission for all assigned classes. The new Learning Continuity and Attendance Plan (LCP) requirements captured in the California Education Code sections 43509 (a)(1)(A) and (f)(1)(F) identify noncompliance with the California Compulsory Education Laws as a student's absence from 3 or more consecutive school days within a week or 60 percent of the instructional days within a school week. Restated, the attendance requirement is now frequent or daily live, synchronous interaction between two or more students and the instructor. For compliance with the LCP an absence is defined as a student's failure to virtually attend an assigned class or engagement session.

Excelsior's LCP instructional goals and processes include universal supports for all students as well as targeted supports for English Learners, Students with Disabilities, Foster Youth, McKinney-Vento students and students identified as low-income. Capturing daily attendance via our Aeries Student Information System allows Excelsior to have early identification along with automated parent notification should a student be absent from any assigned class or engagement session.

The aim of Excelsior's tiered reengagement strategies is to address the different circumstances students and families are facing during the COVID-19 pandemic and the associated shift to a 100% distance learning environment. Specifically, our strategies are meant to help re-engage students and families experiencing trauma, isolation, and a lack of access to the necessary supports to participate and fully engage in school on a daily basis while at home. Our LCP promotes a culture of collaboration between the assigned credentialed Teacher/Facilitator, all credentialed Classroom Teachers, the student, parents and student's peers.

During the 100 percent mandated distance learning instructional period Excelsior Charter Schools will continue to offer the regular master schedule of core, elective and college courses by conducting all classes and workshops via virtual, live instruction on the Zoom video conferencing platform. Every student is assigned an individualized course schedule that keeps them on track with their graduation, A-G and/or Personal Life Plan requirements. To ensure online access every Excelsior student is issued an iPad or Chromebook at enrollment if needed. Assistance is also provided for any student that does not have reliable Internet connectivity in their home.

### **Excelsior Charter School's Tiered Re-engagement Procedures:**

Note: Daily attendance is taken in every assigned class or support workshop.

1. Absence from 1 or more daily classes. – Our automated Aeries system notifies the parent via phone and email that their student missed one or more classes during that school day.
2. Second consecutive full day of absence. – Along with the automated notification, the student's assigned Facilitator will contact the parent(s) to confirm the accuracy of the pupil record and communicate the compulsory education requirement. The Facilitator will also seek to understand and intervene with any barriers that are preventing the student from engaging in distance learning.
3. Third day of absence. – Student is in full breach of the California Compulsory education attendance law. (#1) Certified letter sent to home in an attempt to fully reengage the student in synchronous instruction.

4. Fourth consecutive day of absence – Site administration will initiate a written and verbal communication notifying family of an upcoming student meeting. Meeting attendance will bring families back into legal attendance compliance.

5. Fifth consecutive day of absence – Certified letter communicating referral to the District Attorney for the School Attendance Review Board. Embedded within Excelsior’s LCP are multiple opportunities for students to be engaged academically and social emotionally. It is our desire to fully support our students and families during this time of uncertainty and isolation by ensuring that all students have the opportunity to access our instruction, support and socialization opportunities.

### **Modification of Re engagement Notifications- New SB 98 Student Participation and Attendance Letters**

In an effort to continually improve our processes the Excelsior tiered reengagement letters were modified to be less compliance oriented in the tone and tenor in exchange for adopting a tone of compassion and assistance specifically while on the 100% distance learning mandate. Excerpts from the first of three tiered Student Participation & Attendance letters:

At Excelsior Charter Schools, we strive to work as a team with our families to ensure our students succeed, both in school and as adults. We recognize that distance learning and the COVID-19 pandemic present unique challenges for parents, students, and educators. For that reason, we want to create a partnership with you to make sure \_\_\_\_\_ can fully participate and engage in distance learning. Your support in this process is critical!

Our records indicate that your child has missed: \_\_ assignments, \_\_ teacher check-ins, \_\_ days without logging on to distance learning.

Did You Know:

- Excelsior Charter Schools can assist you with internet connections and devices.
- Excelsior Charter Schools can offer support and training to help your child navigate distance learning.
- Excelsior Charter Schools can provide counseling, health, and mental health service referrals for your child.
- Excelsior Charter Schools can inform parents on how to work with students during distance learning.
- Your student can participate and attend by logging on to live classroom activities, doing assignments, and completing online instructional activities.
- Student participation and engagement in distance learning are required.

We would like to work together to identify obstacles to your child’s participation and find ways to overcome them. We are happy to connect you with resources that support your child's social, emotional, and academic success. In addition, we will keep you informed of your child’s attendance/participation and communicate with you if your child misses online learning sessions. Please contact your child's Facilitator or school Administration to learn more about these important support services.

We know there are a wide variety of challenges and obstacles to student participation during distance learning. Our school staff is committed to working with you to meet these challenges. We look forward to improving your child’s participation together as a team.

All communications are available in both English and Spanish. Our McKinney-Vento, Foster Youth, English Learners and Students with Disabilities face greater challenges for engagement during the distance learning mandate. As such, Excelsior will work hard to understand and

remove any barriers to allow the student to be fully engaged in the educational process and for our families to remain in compliance with the California Compulsory Education laws.

## 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.]

The Excelsior Corona campus provides the National School Lunch Program through a vended meal model supported by Revolution Foods and School Food Solutions. The Excelsior Corona campus has been granted a waiver by the California Department of Education to employ the Seamless Summer Option until December 31, 2020. Excelsior employs a 5-day per week meal service support at all campuses. Students are fed in a non-congregated, no contact setting that allows meals to be served, taken home and consumed. To encourage consumption during an environment with limited vendor capacity Excelsior meals vary between shelf stable, Grab and Go and refrigerator stable, more complex meal options. During all services the appropriate signage allows families to fully understand if the daily service must be consumed within a two-hour period or if it is shelf stable for up to 5 days. Dates are clearly marked on all packages or provided at the time of meal service. All time and temperature rules are strictly followed. Additional measures have been taken to ensure proper sanitation of service areas to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus through serial contact.

Once we are allowed to return to on campus instruction students will receive and consume meals on campus following the appropriate hygiene and social distancing requirements in place at the time.

Special emphasis is given to our McKinney-Vento and pupils with exceptional needs to ensure that they are properly identified to receive free meal service. Excelsior staff is fully trained to be able to casually identify if further discussion is appropriate to determine whether or not a student may be newly qualified as homeless under the McKinney-Vento act.

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

Section	Description	Total Funds	Contributing
Parent and Student Engagement	Television commercials highlighting programmatic changes to support 100% distance learning.	\$1,000	N
Parent and Student Engagement	Video production: Administrator descriptions of modified learning environments for all Excelsior sites.	\$250	N
Parent and Student Engagement	Increased translation service costs	\$250	Y

Operational	Increased Security costs	\$1,000	Y
Operational	Additional cell phones for staff usage	\$300	N

## 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
7.02%	\$73,415

### 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.]

In March of 2020 when all California schools were mandated to shift to 100% distance learning Excelsior Charter Schools leveraged our hybrid model to begin fully supporting all students virtually. Prior to the shift roughly 45% of our instructional supports were delivered virtually. Upon notice of the distance learning mandate Excelsior Charter Schools evaluated our readiness to provide robust virtual-only instruction. Staff members were surveyed to best understand what professional development, instructional and operational supports were necessary to increase academic performance, mitigate learning loss and aid the health and wellness of the students and staff. Our initial actions included:

- Closing all campuses to visitation.
- Ensuring 100% of students had electronic devices to support instruction.
- Increasing Zoom contract to support 100% virtual instruction
- Migrating all document signage to DocuSign
- Transitioning to no-contact lunch service in front of all school sites.
- Coordinating internet support for families of students with exceptional needs.

An ongoing self-evaluation included a specific administrator focus to determine how our most vulnerable students; McKinney-Vento, Foster Youth, English Learners, Students with Disabilities and Students with exceptional needs would be affected. When evaluating the entirety of our program we considered specific remedies to address the amplified needs of these special populations during the Stay Home order. To encourage full engagement and maintain academic continuity we kept these student groups in mind as we developed virtual instructional and wellness strategies. The need for increased professional development to build confidence and collective teacher efficacy when operating

solely in the virtual environment became apparent. Within the first week Zoom training via live instruction and recorded webinar sessions was provided for the entire teaching and support staff. During the same time period the Excelsior Information Technology and Curriculum departments hosted daily support sessions to address technological issues and best understand how their respective department operations needed to be modified to support site and central office staff remotely. In all discussions, special consideration was given to determine how the needs of the McKinney-Vento, Foster Youth, English Learners, Students with Disabilities and students with exceptional needs differed from the needs of the general student population. In order to avoid resource-based learning gaps it was determined that the needs of the students in our special populations would be met first. The identified needs were as follows:

- Hot spots for any family within our special populations that communicated a need via the survey, email or telephonic communication.
- Bilingual support staff to assist in virtual instruction.
- Ensuring that Bilingual Excelsior Facilitators were assigned to English Learner families.
- Increased translation services.
- Spanish specific support videos.
- Allowing parents to pick up meals for students by having the student ID number.
- Prioritizing our low-income families in our “Pull Up and Pick Up” Family Support events.
- Ensuring that Excelsior Facilitators made frequent, live contact with our student in our special populations to explain available mental health, wellness, tutoring and nutritional resources.
- Ensuring that the “Hold Harmless” grading mandate was followed for all students, specifically newly enrolled McKinney-Vento, EL, FY, Students with Disabilities and low-income students.

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

The 100% distance learning mandate provided a unique opportunity for Excelsior Charter Schools to reexamine our virtual delivery models, resources and frameworks. More specifically, our leadership adopted a focused mindset of understanding how we can best provide equity for our English Learners, Foster Youth and low-income students in the virtual space. A notable improvement to our processes that specifically benefit our most vulnerable student populations was to allow all returning students to maintain their assigned electronic devices over the summer months. Even prior to the availability of hot spots Excelsior had taken the step to coordinate free internet access for low-income families and for those that didn't meet the strict qualifications but had extenuating circumstances Excelsior covered the cost for the connectivity.

Family attendance at virtual site meetings increased for students in these special populations due to Excelsior resolving the connectivity issue and the elimination of the physical travel requirement. Tutoring and counseling services also have increased participation due to the strong correlation between having reliable internet, the reduced time commitment and elimination of the cost associated with traveling to the school site.

Language development and acquisition largely occurs with daily interaction for English Learners. A lack of confidence in the distance learning environment can easily translate into a pupil learning loss in English language proficiency for English Learners. Ongoing virtual spaces are being established to allow our English Learner students a safe space for online verbal and written interactions. In addition to

English language development this will provide another opportunity for social interaction which is a strategy to improve the social/emotional well-being of this student population.

Excelsior Charter Schools will continue our focus to support the needs of our most vulnerable student populations as part of our continuous improvement model.