

**From:** ["Fairheart, Donald" <donald.fairheart@doe.virginia.gov>](mailto:donald.fairheart@doe.virginia.gov)  
**To:** ["Brabrand, Scott S" <ssbrabrand@fcps.edu>](mailto:ssbrabrand@fcps.edu)  
**CC:** ["Torre, John" <jjtorre@fcps.edu>](mailto:jjtorre@fcps.edu)  
["James Lane \ \(james.lane@doe.virginia.gov\)" <james.lane@doe.virginia.gov>](mailto:james.lane@doe.virginia.gov)  
**Date:** 4/22/2020 7:44:44 AM  
**Subject:** Re: [External] Re: Talking points - distance learning

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Our proposed response is below.....we will also share with the Governor's Office.

Please let me know your thoughts....thanks~

Thank you for contacting the Virginia Department of Education regarding this important matter. Dr. Lane has received your email and shared it with our Constituent Services team for response. We recognize that the impact to students during an extended school closure can be significant as the learning time and support students receive at school are not easily supplemented or replaced.

Virginia is a local control state with regard to educational implementation. As such, local school divisions make decisions about exactly how teaching and learning are continued for students. The VDOE is in regular contact with all 132 school divisions in the Commonwealth, especially now, to provide information and guidance on issues related to educational services in the Commonwealth. In addition to weekly correspondence and phone calls with division superintendents, the VDOE provides guidance on its web page - [COVID-19 and Virginia Public Schools](#).

The VDOE is aware that Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) experienced a number of issues with the rollout of its distance learning program last week, halting service until they could address them. A [detailed description](#), updated on April 20, describing the current status, appears on the FCPS web page. FCPS Division Superintendent, Dr. Scott Braband, has announced that the school division will no longer use the learning platform Blackboard Learn 24-7 as a tool for face-to-face instruction. Until a new video platform is established, FCPS teachers will continue to provide other instructional opportunities to students through a variety of tools such as Google Classroom, pre-recorded videos, learning packets, eBooks, and other approved digital resources. FCPS has indicated that teachers will contact students over the next several days when they are ready to resume face-to-face virtual learning opportunities. Principals will also share messages with the community about their learning plans.

In terms of learning resources provided at the state level, the VDOE has developed a number of [statewide technology initiatives that support instruction](#) across the Commonwealth, including [open educational resources](#) that educational entities throughout Virginia create, share, and access freely. Additionally, on April 13, 2020, the VDOE [announced the expansion of its Virtual Virginia \(VVA\) program](#). [Virtual Virginia](#) offers online courses and digital content to Virginia's students and educators. As part of the expansion, VVA course content will be made available to any school division that

chooses to enroll students and teachers into the program, at no cost to the school division. School division teachers will be provided space within the VVA platform to choose and create course content, share content between participating divisions, and edit content to personalize instruction.

We hope this information is helpful to you and appreciate your shared concern for the best interest of our students.

Donald R. Fairheart, M.B.A.  
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On Tue, Apr 21, 2020 at 10:07 PM Brabrand, Scott S <[ssbrabrand@fcps.edu](mailto:ssbrabrand@fcps.edu)> wrote:

Great

Sent from my iPhone

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**From:** Fairheart, Donald <[donald.fairheart@doe.virginia.gov](mailto:donald.fairheart@doe.virginia.gov)>

**Sent:** Tuesday, April 21, 2020 3:53:06 PM

**To:** Brabrand, Scott S <[ssbrabrand@fcps.edu](mailto:ssbrabrand@fcps.edu)>

**Cc:** Torre, John <[jjtorre@fcps.edu](mailto:jjtorre@fcps.edu)>; James Lane (<[james.lane@doe.virginia.gov](mailto:james.lane@doe.virginia.gov)> <[james.lane@doe.virginia.gov](mailto:james.lane@doe.virginia.gov)>

**Subject:** [External] Re: Talking points - distance learning

Thanks Scott.....I will ask our team to craft a message/response and send to you for feedback.

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On Tue, Apr 21, 2020 at 3:53 PM Brabrand, Scott S <[ssbrabrand@fcps.edu](mailto:ssbrabrand@fcps.edu)> wrote:

Rusty,

Here are the talking points we gave our school board today

Sorry this got to you and James

Scott

Good afternoon. Below are talking points about Blackboard Learn 24-7 and the transition to Blackboard Collaborate and Google Meet for “live” instruction along with information requested about the Blackboard and Schoology contracts.

We recognize that our students and teachers need a reliable system for “live” teacher-led learning.

Superintendent Brabrand announced that FCPS will no longer use Blackboard Learn 24-7 as a tool for face to face instruction.

Until a new video platform is established, FCPS teachers will continue to provide other instructional opportunities to students through a variety of tools such as Google Classroom, pre-recorded videos, learning packets, eBooks, and other approved digital resources as well as directing students to instructional programming on Channels 21, 25, and 99.

This “asynchronous” or alternative learning has not been interrupted by the technical issues with Blackboard Learn 24-7 and will continue at all of our schools.

Blackboard Learn 24-7 will only be used by teachers and students to access instructional resources and supports.

Schools are going to transition to virtual face to face instruction through **Blackboard Collaborate Ultra** links or **Google Meet** links.

Teachers will contact students over the next several days when they are ready resume face to face virtual learning opportunities and the platform that will be used. Principals will also share messages with the community about their learning plans.

Dr. Brabrand also announced that he is creating the Superintendent's Technology Advisory Council. The council will meet regularly and offer guidance to help resolve any current distance learning challenges and provide ongoing support to enhance distance learning in a K-12 environment. FCPS’s goal is to create a sustainable, efficient, safe, and connected learning environment to support students and staff.

We are committed to an improved distance learning experience for all our students for the remainder of the school year.

**Technology Council:** If you have suggestions or are receiving requests to serve on the council, please forward to Tracey Wynne in OCCR and she will forward to the council co-chairs. [tbwynne@fcps.edu](mailto:tbwynne@fcps.edu)

Sent from my iPhone

