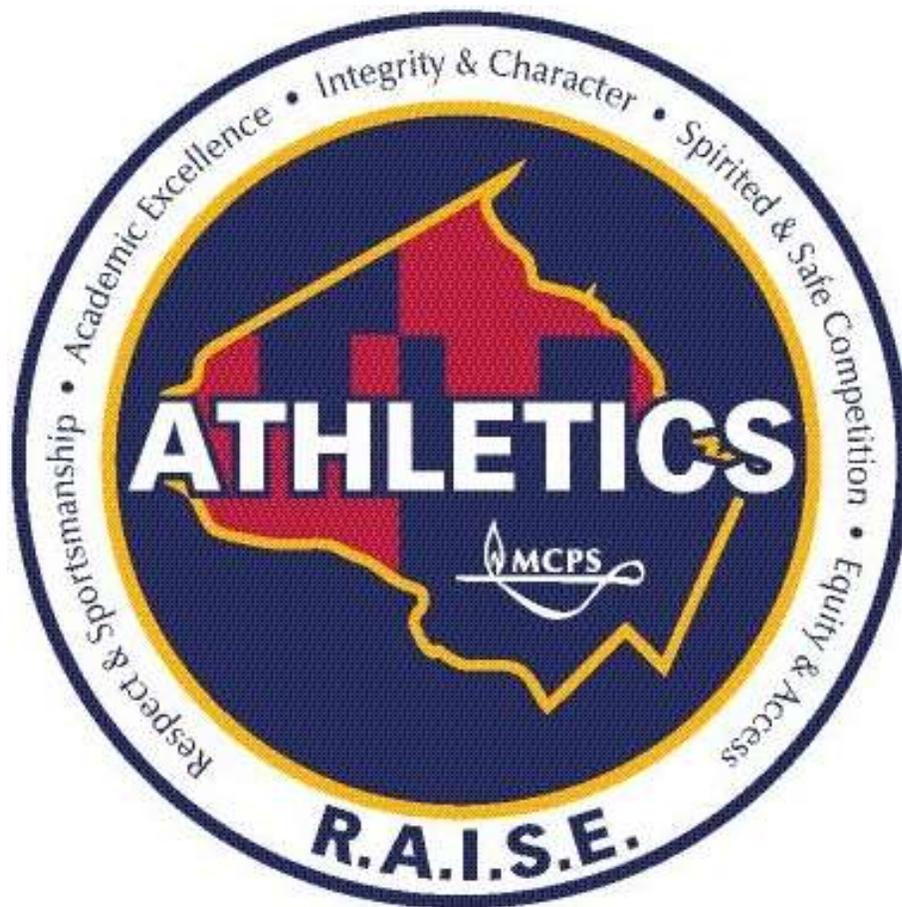


R.A.I.S.E. REIMAGINED



The Reimagination of the MCPS Athletics Program
During the COVID-19 Pandemic

WE CAN, WE WILL, We R.A.I.S.E.

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R.A.I.S.E. REIMAGINED

The Reimagination of the MCPS Athletics Program During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Following is an overview of the reimagination of the Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) interscholastic athletics program during the COVID-19 pandemic.

R.A.I.S.E. REIMAGINED OVERVIEW

During the 2020–2021 school year, the Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) athletics program will be administered virtually and in-person, if state and county health metrics allow. Program operations will align with the two semesters of instruction for MCPS and with Maryland Public Secondary Schools Athletic Association (MPSSAA) guidelines and operating procedures. The first semester of MCPS Athletics operations will be virtual, while the second semester will hopefully allow for in-person engagement. Both semesters will feature sport seasons that maximize the opportunities for students to participate in the program, across all interscholastic sports. The second semester will be administered in alignment with CDC, state and county health guidelines.

The R.A.I.S.E. Reimagined plan provides MCPS athletics stakeholders with guidance on implementing the virtual athletic seasons during semester one of the virtual-only educational model for distance learning. In addition, MCPS Athletics will align with the non-athletic extracurricular activities to recognize secondary students for commitment in participation in a wide range of MCPS Athletic and Extracurricular Activities.

Students will be recognized for various levels of commitment, as outlined below, with the **MCPS Certificate of Student Engagement**.

- Students are encouraged to participate in more than one activity to create positive relationships with their peers in interest alike activities and with adult professionals outside of the school day/core curricular courses.
- Students can use this documentation to supplement their college and job applications.
- Sponsors will verify student commitment with their organization(s) at the end of the season, semester, year as appropriate.

Type of Certificate	Description
 MCPS Bronze Certificate of Student Engagement	Students successfully participate in 1-3 various athletic and/or extracurricular activities
 MCPS Silver Certificate of Student Engagement	Students successfully participate in 4-6 various athletic and/or extracurricular activities
 MCPS Gold Certificate of Student Engagement	Students successfully participate in 7+ various athletic and/or extracurricular activities

We CAN, We WILL, We R.A.I.S.E.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and the implementation of the *R.A.I.S.E. Reimagined* framework, program operations and stakeholders across the MCPS Athletics program will embrace a positive mindset founded on the following charges:

- **We CAN** – we will focus on what we CAN do throughout the pandemic, not what we cannot do. While we recognize the disappointment experienced by students, coaches, and all stakeholders, we must focus on the positive aspects of participation and engagement.
- **We WILL** – we will be innovative and create the GREATEST possible experience for our student-athletes throughout the school year - both in virtual and in-person experiences (when health metrics allow).
- **We R.A.I.S.E.** – we will demonstrate an unwavering commitment to our R.A.I.S.E. core values of MCPS Athletics.

In this regard, MCPS will implement in-person opportunities when health metrics and school operations allow during the 2020–2021 school year. Any program updates will be communicated as they become available.

REIMAGINATION PROCESS

The R.A.I.S.E. Reimagined Framework was constructed through a collaborative process that included all stakeholders across MCPS Athletics. A [survey](#) was distributed to collect feedback from all stakeholders. This feedback was used by our Design Teams, consisting of our R.A.I.S.E. Reimagineers that were assembled for each sport and for each level of the interscholastic athletics program – high school and middle school. Valuable feedback was also captured in town halls with students, parents and community members, and the NAACP Parents’ Council. Design Teams consisted of leaders across the MCPS athletics program, including:

- Athletics specialists (high school)
- Athletic coordinators (middle school)
- Sport directors
- District representatives
- Student-Athlete Leadership Council representatives
- Coaches

During the course of the design process, all coaches across the MCPS athletics program were invited to contribute and provide feedback. Additional stakeholders from schools and central services contributed to the framework, including certified athletic trainers for MCPS. Planning and design also incorporated feedback and ideas garnered through collaboration with leaders from other local school systems across Maryland and the Washington D.C. metropolitan region. The collective IQ of coaches and all stakeholders allowed for a strong foundation for the R.A.I.S.E. Reimagined Framework. It should be noted that this framework will be a fluid document, as more ideas and engagement opportunities will likely arise during the course of the virtual first semester. Similarly, the shared resources – systemwide and sport-specific – will continue to be updated, so that coaches have a myriad of options when engaging student-athletes in the virtual environment. The planning process for the reimagination of MCPS Athletics showcases the dedication and commitment of all stakeholders to ensure that student-athletes and coaches have the GREATEST possible experience during the upcoming school year, founded on our beliefs of **We CAN, We WILL, We R.A.I.S.E.!**

RESOURCES AND DEFINITIONS

To provide consistency in referencing documents and plans, the following definitions are provided:

Montgomery County Public Schools Guiding Resources

- [COVID-19 Athletics Information](#) webpage – the centralized source of information regarding the impact of COVID-19 on the MCPS athletics program.
- [Engagement of Activity \(EOA\) Framework](#) – this document is the overarching guidance document for all extracurricular activities, including athletics. From this document, MCPS Athletics has created two overarching frameworks/plans – *R.A.I.S.E. Reimagined* and the *Return to R.A.I.S.E.* strategic plan.
- *R.A.I.S.E. Reimagined* – this document provides an overview of the reimagination of the delivery of the MCPS Athletics program during the COVID-19 pandemic, including plans for a virtual first semester and in-person second semester. The document serves as the MCPS implementation plan for the Maryland Public Secondary Schools Athletic Association (MPSSAA) Two-Semester Plan.
- [Return to R.A.I.S.E. Strategic Plan](#) – this document guides the incremental return of the MCPS athletics program to in-person activities, in accordance with the MPSSAA Roadmap for Return guidance.
- High School and Middle School Athletics Handbooks Update – due to COVID-19 and the uncertainties around the in-person delivery of the MCPS athletics program during the second semester, many updates in the high school and middle school athletics handbooks cannot be made at this time. In the meantime, all rules and regulations in the 2019–2020 editions of the MCPS high school and middle school athletics handbooks will remain applicable until the updated handbooks are released. Any modifications to rules or regulations will be communicated. For instance, per the Board of Education, all students are academically eligible to participate in athletics and extracurricular activities during the first semester of the 2020–2021 school year.

Maryland Public Secondary Schools Athletic Association Resources

- [MPSSAA Roadmap to Return to Interscholastic Athletics Update Page](#) – the website with the latest MPSSAA information regarding COVID-19.
- [Roadmap for Return](#) – this document provides local school systems with guidance involving the safe return of in-person activities. The *MCPS Return to R.A.I.S.E. Strategic Plan* is the MCPS implementation plan of this document.
- Two-Semester Plan – this plan provides local school systems with guidance on how to implement the two-semester model of operations for interscholastic athletics.

VIRTUAL SEASONS SEMESTER ONE OVERVIEW

The first semester of program operations for MCPS Athletics will be virtual and will feature three sport seasons, which will be conducted within the confines of the first semester. Outside of the confines of the formal seasons, coaches will be able to engage with students, per the current phase of the Return to R.A.I.S.E. Strategic Plan (current phase is always listed on the MCPS COVID-19 website. Detailed information regarding the virtual delivery of the MCPS athletics program follows.

High School

The high school interscholastic athletics program is available to all students in ninth, tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grades, following the traditional order of the sport seasons.

HIGH SCHOOL VIRTUAL SEASON OVERVIEW

Fall Season	Winter Season	Spring Season
September 14 – October 16, 2020	October 26 – December 4, 2020	December 14 – January 22, 2021
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cheerleading • Cross Country – Coed • Field Hockey • Football • Golf • Soccer – Boys' • Soccer – Girls' • Team Handball • Volleyball – Girls' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basketball – Boys' • Basketball – Girls' • Bocce • Pompons • Swimming and Diving • Indoor Track & Field • Wrestling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allied Softball • Baseball • Gymnastics • Lacrosse – Boys' • Lacrosse – Girls' • Softball • Tennis – Boys' • Tennis – Girls' • Track & Field • Volleyball – Boys' • Volleyball – Coed

ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITY WINDOW

Monday – Friday: 3:30 - 9:00 p.m. and Saturday: 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.*

The high school virtual athletic season consists of a minimum of three student-athlete and coach engagement sessions per week (corollary sports will meet two times per week), over the course of five weeks. Coaches may schedule engagement sessions beginning 15 minutes post school/duty day until 9 p.m. and from 9 a.m. – 3 p.m. on Saturdays. * With principal (or designee) approval, engagement sessions may be conducted outside of these windows of time.

This calendar allows students and staff two weeks to start the school year and prepare for the start of the first season. There is also at least one week between each season and allows at least one week at the end of the semester to allow for a transition into the second semester and transition into the in-person operations of MCPS Athletics.

With regard to the high school virtual seasons, cheerleading will only occur in the fall and pompons will only occur in the winter.

Outside of the confines of the virtual season, coaches will also be able to engage with students, consistent with the out-of-season guidelines per [COVID-19 Return to Raise Operating Procedures for MCPS Athletics](#). In addition, MPSSAA regulations apply to out-of-season participation; please refer to the [Out-of-Season Participation Guidelines](#) on the MCPS Athletics Web Page. Coaches should make every effort not to schedule out-of-season engagement sessions that would conflict with in season virtual engagement.

Middle School

The middle school interscholastic athletics program is available for all students in sixth, seventh, and eighth grade, and consists of three virtual sport seasons, following the traditional order of the sport seasons.

MIDDLE SCHOOL VIRTUAL SEASON OVERVIEW

Fall Season	Winter Season	Spring Season
September 21 – October 9, 2020	October 26 – November 20, 2020	November 30 – December 18, 2020
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cross Country – Coed • Softball – Boys' • Softball – Girls' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basketball – Boys' • Basketball – Girls' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soccer – Boys' • Soccer – Girls'

ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITY WINDOW

Monday – Friday: 3:30 – 6:00 p.m.

The middle school virtual athletic seasons consists of a modified version of the high school season and includes two student-athlete and coach engagement sessions per week, for a total of six engagement

sessions over the course of three to four weeks. The engagement sessions are scheduled to occur on Tuesdays and Thursdays fifteen minutes post duty day for staff.

This calendar allows students and staff three weeks to start the school year and prepare for the start of the first season. There is also a two-week transition period between each season.

ATHLETICS REGISTRATION

High School

All students participating in the fall, winter, and spring virtual seasons, as part of the MCPS interscholastic athletics program, must complete the online registration process. Registration is done electronically through the school specific athletics registration link posted on the school's website. Students must have a valid physical on file with the school. Given the unprecedented circumstances, for students who are unable to secure an updated physical, MCPS will extend the expiration date of an existing physical by one calendar year. To the extent a student does not have a physical on file with the school, the student will need to obtain one. Due to the strenuous nature of selected activities, each student is encouraged to consult their physician concerning fitness to participate in the program. During any live engagement, parents/guardians and students must ensure that surroundings are free of obstacles and that an appropriate plan is in place on how to access help in the event of an emergency.

Student-athlete participation in the first semester of virtual seasons does not guarantee or impact placement on a team roster during second semester.

HIGH SCHOOL FALL VIRTUAL ATHLETIC SEASON REGISTRATION	
FALL VIRTUAL SEASON	
Date	Athletics Registration Communication
August 25, 2020	Athletics Specialist <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Announcement on Website and Twitter • Connect Ed
August 25 – September 8, 2020	Athletics Registration Window
September 9 – September 11, 2020	Coach Welcome Email
WINTER VIRTUAL SEASON	
Date	Athletics Registration Communication
October 6, 2020	Athletics Specialist <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Announcement on Website and Twitter • Connect Ed
October 6 – October 20, 2020	Athletics Registration Window
October 21 – October 23, 2020	Coach Welcome Email
SPRING VIRTUAL SEASON	
Date	Athletics Registration Communication
November 24, 2020	Athletics Specialist <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Announcement on Website and Twitter • Connect Ed
November 24 – December 8, 2020	Athletics Registration Window
December 9 – December 11, 2020	Coach Welcome Email

Middle School

All students participating in the fall, winter, and spring virtual seasons, as part of the MCPS interscholastic athletics program, must complete the online registration process. Registration is done electronically through the school's specific athletics registration links posted on the school's website. Students and parents/guardians who have difficulty with registration should contact the athletics specialist or athletic coordinator at the local school.

Due to the strenuous nature of selected activities, each student is encouraged to consult their physician concerning fitness to participate in the program. Parents/legal guardians authorize and consent to their child's participation in interscholastic athletics and sports and assume the risk of any injuries that may occur while participating in virtual athletic activities. During any live engagement, parents/guardians and students must ensure that surroundings are free of obstacles and that an appropriate plan is in place on how to access help in the event of an emergency.

Student-athlete participation in the first semester of virtual seasons does not guarantee or impact placement on a team roster during second semester.

MIDDLE SCHOOL FALL VIRTUAL ATHLETIC SEASON	
FALL VIRTUAL SEASON	
Date	Athletics Registration Communication
August 28, 2020	Athletic Coordinator <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Announcement on Website and/or Twitter• Connect Ed
August 28 – September 16, 2020	Athletics Registration Window
September 16 – September 19, 2020	Coach Welcome Email
WINTER VIRTUAL SEASON	
Date	Athletics Registration Communication
October 8, 2020	Athletic Coordinator <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Announcement on Website and/or Twitter• Connect Ed
October 8 – October 20, 2020	Athletics Registration Window
October 21 – October 23, 2020	Coach Welcome Email
SPRING VIRTUAL SEASON	
Date	Athletics Registration Communication
October 28, 2020	Athletic Coordinator <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Announcement on Website and/or Twitter• Connect Ed
October 28 – November 17, 2020	Athletics Registration Window
November 23 – November 24, 2020	Coach Welcome Email

EQUITY AND ACCESS

Equity in access is an expectation for both the middle and high school virtual athletic seasons. All students in grades sixth – eighth are eligible to participate in the middle school virtual seasons and all students in grades ninth – twelfth are eligible to participate in the high school virtual seasons. Local schools should employ best practices and a variety of platforms to communicate registration windows and deadlines, student-athlete-parent meetings, and other pertinent activities. Per the Board of Education, all students are academically eligible to participate in athletics and extracurricular activities during the first semester.

ENGAGEMENT AND PROGRAMMING

The virtual season programming for both the middle and high school virtual seasons will be available according to the following four program levels:

1. Systemwide engagement opportunities, including a guest speakers series, R.A.I.S.E. core values promotion, and other resources as appropriate;
2. Schoolwide engagement, per the athletics specialist or athletic coordinator;
3. Sport-specific countywide engagement; and
4. Team-specific engagement.

Curriculum and programming for both the middle and high school virtual seasons includes curricula and programming to 1) include social-emotional and academic check-ins, 2) instill sport-specific knowledge and strategies, and 3) promote the MCPS Athletics R.A.I.S.E. Core Values, as follows:

- Respect & Sportsmanship – team building, potential engagement with other schools;
- Academic Excellence – academic support and college recruiting support;
- Integrity & Character – character education, including speakers and programs;
- Spirited & Safe Competition – skills and sport instruction, along with COVID-19 safety education in preparation for in-person activities; and
- Equity & Access – efforts supporting equity and social justice initiatives.

In addition, the MCPS Athletics Unit will host a *Systemwide Guest Speaker Series* during both the middle and high school virtual seasons. Local schools interested in hosting a guest speaker must submit a request at the following link: [Request Zoom Access for Guest Speakers](#)

Curriculum and programming was designed by the sport-specific R.A.I.S.E. Reimagineer design teams.

ENGAGEMENT OF ACTIVITY PLATFORM

Coaches and student-athletes are expected to follow all expectations according to the MCPS [Code of Conduct](#) and [Student Rights and Responsibilities](#). Virtual platforms are the only acceptable means of meeting with students. Student and coach safety, especially in a virtual space, is of the utmost importance.

The approved meeting platform for MCPS is Zoom. Coaches must use their MCPS Zoom account if they are web conferencing with students. Coaches should never use a personal/non-MCPS Zoom account while engaging with students. In addition, coaches should always give students the option of turning off their camera. The [MCPS Web Conferencing Center](#) has several resources to assist coaches with virtual engagement including:

- [Zoom Web Conferencing: Getting Started and Troubleshooting for Staff](#)
- [Day 1 Quick Tips Zoom Web Conferencing](#)
- [Zoom Meeting Participants - Attendance](#)

Coaches are encouraged to utilize a Canvas Classroom to support the delivery of engagement activities for student-athletes during the semester one virtual athletics season. Athletics specialists and athletic coordinators will oversee the set-up of canvas classrooms per coach request. In addition, coaches will also be able to utilize Google Classroom, in order to support students during the virtual delivery of the athletics program.

- [MyMCPS Classroom The Next Generation Staff, Student, and Parent Portal](#)
- [How to Use Google Classroom 2020 – Tutorial for Beginners](#)

ROSTERS

Athletic specialists/athletic coordinators will generate a roster from the Athletics Registration form to share with coaches prior to the start of the virtual season. Coaches will then generate a welcome email for student-athletes. Coaches are required to submit a roster of student-athletes completing the season no later than seven days after the culmination of the virtual season. Attendance and participation should be a consideration in determining whether or not the student-athlete has successfully met expectations for completing the season and qualifying for a Certificate of Student Engagement.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Athletics Specialists/Athletic Coordinators Expectations

1. Promote the Virtual Athletics Program through messaging and social media as champions of **We Can, We Will, We RAISE**.
2. Manage the registration process for each season including the collection of physicals.
3. Provide coaches with the registration information for all students in their respective program.
4. Ensure that coaches are aware of systemwide pre and postseason (high school) meeting expectations.
5. Conduct local school preseason meetings with coaches.
6. Conduct local school meetings with students, and parents/guardians in alignment with schoolwide operations and meetings (ie., orientations, back to school nights, etc.)
7. Provide on-going support for their assigned sport for the duration for the virtual experience including attending the sport specific systemwide pre and postseason meetings (high school).
8. Support coaches throughout the virtual experience with technology and other matters related to student engagement.
9. Submit the number of students participating in each team/sport to the Athletics Unit.
10. Supervise and monitor the delivery and operations of the virtual athletics program.
11. Submit a final roster of students who successfully complete the season in each team/sport to the Athletics Unit.

High Schools

High school coaches will complete a virtual season calendar, in addition to the High School Engagement of Activity Plan 2.0 (EOA). The EOA is used to assist coaches with implementing the framework, which provides guidance for conducting athletics during the virtual-only educational model for distance learning, caused by the coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19).

Coaches and sponsors will document specific engagement activities that will be used to support the physical, mental and social-emotional well-being of students. The calendar should be completed and submitted to the athletics specialist (AD) prior to the beginning of each week. The EOA should be completed and submitted to the AD one week after the culmination of the virtual season.

The following resources are intended to assist coaches in completing the High School 2.0 EOA Plan.

1. [High School EOA](#)
2. [Systemwide - High School Virtual Season Calendar Template](#)
3. [Individual Coach - High School Virtual Athletics Calendar Template](#)
4. [High School EOA 2.0 Sample/Best Practices](#)
5. [HS Sports and Virtual Seasons Resources Folder](#)

Middle Schools

The Middle School Engagement of Activity Plan 2.0 is used to assist coaches with implementing the Middle School Engagement of Activity 2.0 (MS-EOA) framework, which provides guidance for conducting athletic activities during the virtual-only educational model for distance learning. Coaches will document specific engagement activities that will be used to support the physical, mental and social-emotional well-being of students in the MS-EOA 2.0 Plan. The Middle School Engagement of Activity Plan 2.0 should be completed and submitted to the athletic coordinator within three days of the culmination of the virtual season.

The Middle School Engagement of Activity Pre-season Planning Tool frames the organization and planning of engagement prior to the virtual athletic season. The pre-season planning tool will assist coaches with completing the MS-EOA 2.0 plan. The plan should include systemwide, schoolwide, sport/extracurricular and team/club specific engagement activities. Coaches should complete and submit the Middle School Engagement of Activity Pre-season Planning Tool to their respective athletic coordinator no less than three days prior to the start of the virtual season.

The following resources are intended to assist coaches in completing the High School 2.0 EOA Plan.

1. [MS EOA 2.0 Plan and Resources](#)
2. [MS Coaching Resources](#)

RESOURCES FOR COACHES

Coaching resources supporting the planning and executing of virtual engagement for both the high and middle school athletic programs are located on a shared Google drive. The following resource will assist coaches with navigating the shared Google drive.

[Google Drive Tutorial for Beginners](#)

High School

All high school coaches conducting a fall, winter, or spring virtual athletic season during semester one of the 2020–2021 academic year, will have access to the [HS Sports Folders and Virtual Season Resources](#) shared Google folder. The Sports Folders – Virtual shared Google folder contains various kinds of resources to assist coaches with implementing engagement activities during the virtual season. The following is an overview of the folders contained in the Sports Folders – Virtual shared Google folder:

01. Fall Sports

This folder contains suggestions of sport-specific engagement activities for each of the fall sports offered during the fall virtual season.

02. Winter Sports

This folder contains suggestions of sport-specific engagement activities for each of the winter sports offered during the winter virtual season.

03. Spring Sports

This folder contains suggestions of sport-specific engagement activities for each of the spring sports offered during the spring virtual season.

04. Guest Speaker

This folder contains suggestions for sport-specific guest speakers, along with contact information.

05. Virtual Season Framework Resources

This folder contains the meeting agenda, documents, and other resources used to design the high school virtual seasons.

Please note: All Athletic Specialists and coaches must access the HS Sports Folder and Virtual Season Resources shared Google folder using their .net accounts.

Middle School

All middle school coaches conducting a fall, winter, or spring virtual athletic season during semester one of the 2020–2021 academic year, will have access to the [MS Virtual Seasons 2020](#) shared Google folder located in the Middle School Athletics 2020–2021 shared Google folder. The MS Virtual Seasons 2020 shared Google folder contains various kinds of resources to assist coaches with implementing engagement activities during the virtual season. The following is an overview of the folders contained in the MS Virtual Seasons 2020 shared Google folder:

01. We R.A.I.S.E. Engagement of Activity Resources

This folder contains samples of engagement activities for coaches to conduct for each of the four We R.A.I.S.E. Core Values sessions.

02. Sport-specific Engagement of Activity Resources

This folder contains samples of engagement activities for coaches to conduct for each of the four sport-specific engagement sessions.

03. Engagement of Activity 2.0 – MS Plan and Resources

This folder contains a fillable copy of the Middle School Engagement of Activity 2.0 (MS-EOA) Plan for coaches to document the engagement of activity with student-athletes during the virtual season. In addition, this folder contains resources to assist coaches with completing the MS-EOA including the following:

01. MS-EOA Pre-season Planning Tool

02. MS-EOA Sample

03. MS-EOA Best Practices and Suggest Activities

04. Coaching Resources – Articles, PD Courses, Webinars

This folder contains a list of links to various coaching resources on strategies for coaching in the virtual world.

05. Virtual Season Framework Design – Meeting Documents

This folder contains the meeting agenda, documents, and other resources used to design the middle school virtual seasons.

Please note: All Athletic Coordinators and coaches must access the MS Virtual Seasons shared Google folder using their .net accounts.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media (Twitter, Instagram, etc.) can be a powerful tool to further engage student-athletes in the virtual season. Coaches should notify their Athletics Specialists or Athletic Coordinator before establishing a professional social media account. Coaches are individually responsible for all of the content that is uploaded, posted, or made available online. Additionally, as MCPS employees, coaches have a limited expectation of privacy in regards to their professional social media use. Coaches should review the [Employee Code of Conduct](#) and [MCPS Best Practices for Employees](#) prior to any social media use. A coach should make available to their Athletics Specialists/Coordinators the account's login credentials and Athletic Specialist/Coordinators should follow the account.

Coaches should provide students with expectations about how they should conduct themselves on social media, referencing the [MCPS 2020–2021 Code of Conduct](#). Coaches should engage students in the process of setting positive expectations for conduct in a virtual athletics season consistent with the MCPS R.A.I.S.E. core values and the [MCPS Digital Citizenship “Your Character Counts”](#) program.

STIPENDS AND COMPENSATION

The first semester will feature virtual experiences, while the second semester will feature in-person engagement, if health metrics allow. In alignment with the two-semester model, stipend payments for coaches and sponsors will be allocated by semester. A designated amount has been determined for each stipend for the first semester; compensation for coaches and activity sponsors must fall within these designated amounts during the first semester. Stipend payments may not exceed the allocated amounts.

- High school coaches – high school coaches may be paid a maximum of 70 hours (\$1,050) for virtual engagement during the five week formal season (corollary sports will be paid a maximum of 50 hours (\$750); the balance will be allocated for second semester operations.
- Middle school coaches – all middle school coaches may be paid a maximum of 20 hours (\$300) for virtual engagement during the three week formal season; the balance will be allocated for second semester operations.
- Athletic support stipends – game manager, clock operator, and ticket manager stipends, which support in-person operations, will not be allocated during the first semester; however, 50% of the assistant athletics specialist stipend is available for supporting virtual engagement during the first semester.

VOLUNTEER COACHES

Volunteer coaches will be eligible to participate and support students during the virtual delivery of the athletics program if the following parameters are met:

1. The athletics specialist and principal approve – this is indicated by the completion of the volunteer coaches contract (which also includes head coach approval).
2. Volunteer coaches complete the entire hiring/rehiring process that is required during normal operations, including background checks, Child Abuse and Neglect training, and the annual volunteer coaches contract.
3. Volunteer coaches apply for and receive an MCPS email account.
4. Volunteer coaches, similar to in-person settings, may not be alone with students in a virtual session. A member of the athletic department staff approved by the athletics specialist must be present at all times. Similarly, volunteer coaches may not host Zoom or online sessions.

SECOND SEMESTER – IN-PERSON ENGAGEMENT

If current state and local health guidelines and metrics allow, the second semester of program operations would be in-person. Seasons and calendars will be reimagined to operate as many sports as possible, consistent with the designated seasons established by the MPSSAA (the MPSSAA postponed the fall and winter seasons on August 3, 2020). In the event state-level competition is not feasible due to current health metrics, MCPS will implement a local reimagined program that maximizes participation opportunities, consistent with state and county health metrics and school system operations. The reimagination of seasons would apply to both the high school and middle school athletics programs, with appropriate modifications made to middle school sports. More information will be forthcoming from the MPSSAA and during the fall, when more updated health metrics will be available.

- In-person operations will conform with all state and county guidelines in regards to practices, activities, and competition, along with the *Return to R.A.I.S.E.* strategic plan.
- If necessary, only in-county competition would be allowed.
- Competitions would be further locally based, using established divisions for each sport or, if necessary, smaller pods of schools based on geography and rivalries.
- Postseason tournaments may be considered at the conclusion of the regular season. In this scenario, teams could be able to schedule additional games during the administration of the tournament, in order to maximize participation opportunities across all schools.