

July 30, 2020

Dear Armada Area School Families,

Today, we are releasing our fall Return to Learn Plan for the 2020-21 school year. I want to thank my staff, our Board of Education, and our back-to-school taskforce for all the work they have put in to get us to this point.

There are six phases in Governor Whitmer's MI Safe Start Plan. In Phases 1 -3, all school districts in Michigan are required to provide remote learning. In Phases 4 – 6, we can have live face-to-face K-12 instruction with social distancing guidelines in Phases 4 and 5. We have been in Phase 4 since June, and I believe that is where we will be when we open our doors to students on August 31st.

Armada Area Schools will be offering our students two learning options: Face-to-Face Instruction or Virtual Online Learning. The 2020-21 Return to Learn Plan outlines information about each option. In addition, we are releasing some frequently asked questions that we have received about the upcoming school year. Students will need to select one of the two options and commit to a learning program for a trimester at a time. For safety reasons, students cannot choose a combination of the two options. Students can opt in or out of either learning option at the end of each trimester.

We will be releasing more information early next week on how to select a learning option. Also, we will prepare a video message with more details about the 2020-21 school year.

If you have any questions, ideas, or concerns, my door is now open. I can be reached via email at mmusary@armadaschools.org. Please stay safe.

Sincerely,



Michael G. Musary, Ed.S.
Superintendent of Schools

Armada Area Schools will be offering both face-to-face (traditional) and virtual online learning options for our K-12 students during the 2020-21 school year, as long as we are in Phase 4 or higher of the MI Safe Start Plan. In Phases 1-3, all school districts are required to provide a remote learning option for students. For safety reasons, students must choose either face-to-face or virtual online learning. A combination of both is not allowed. Information on signing up for a learning option will be released next week. Students can opt in or out of either learning option at the end of each trimester. The district will follow strict personal protective equipment (PPE) guidelines as required by the MI Safe Schools: 2020-21 Return to School Roadmap. Details of each learning option are below.

Face-to-Face Instruction	Virtual Online Learning
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All K-12 students and staff will return to school in the fall five (5) days a week. • All elementary students will have cohort groups and remain in their classroom, including during lunchtime. Specials teachers will rotate into classrooms with physical education and recess taking place outside, if weather permits. • Face coverings will not be required for elementary students except during bus rides and in the hallways. Secondary students (grades 6-12) will be required to wear face coverings at all times. • Secondary students will take six (6) classes each trimester. They will take three (3) classes per day for two (2) consecutive weeks, each class running for 110 minutes to mitigate contact with the entire student body. • Secondary students will be released 50 minutes earlier than in previous school years to virtually work on non-session class assignments. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - M.S. in-school hours: 7:25 am - 1:35 pm - H.S. in-school hours: 7:35 am - 1:45 pm • Secondary students will eat lunch in their classrooms. • Students will maintain as much social distance as possible in the classrooms. • Secondary students will not have access to hallway lockers. Backpacks and coats must stay with the students all day. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full-time K-12 virtual online learning option will be available utilizing our new Empower platform. • The online option will utilize the same curriculum as our face-to-face instruction. • Armada teachers will coordinate the virtual learning option. • Students will be assessed in the same manner as in-person students and earn a grade in each course. • Daily online attendance and participation is required. • For secondary students, band, choir, orchestra, theatre, physical education, and building trades will NOT be offered in a virtual setting. • Students will have access to extra-curricular activities.

Armada Continuing Education (ACE): ACE is our high school alternative education program designed for students who have fallen behind in graduation requirements. For more information, please contact Mr. Holston at dholston@armadaschools.org.



2020-2021 Return to Learn Plan Frequently Asked Questions

1. What will face-to-face instruction look like at the High School? Middle School? Elementary? Does every class meet everyday? In the classroom we will be practicing social distancing, encouraging proper hygiene, and minimizing how much students mix with others in the hallways and common areas as much as possible. Secondary students will be required to wear masks throughout the day to further mitigate risk of exposure. If students are in close proximity to one another for an extended period of time, plexiglass shields may also be used to protect students and staff. Students will be expected to attend every day for face-to-face instruction.

2. What will the face-to-face schedule look like for middle school and high school students?

The schedule will have students meet in session A with hours 1-3 and Session B with hours 4-6 on alternating two-week blocks. This would enable the district to stagger class changes, breaks, restroom access, and provide for 4 lunch periods. Students would actually get more true instructional time because of the reduction in the number of class changes, and would meet in each class for 110 minutes during each session and then have an online guided work session for the opposite session classes at the end of each day. So during session A, student will attend classes 1-3 and during the guided work, they will be completing work (watching lectures, reading books, etc.) online for session B. During a traditional schedule, they would get 1100 minutes of class time (55 minutes per day X 20 days) and they would get the same 1100 minutes (110 minutes X 10) plus the additional 150 minutes of guided work time (15 X 10 days). See below for the times.

Additionally, by releasing students for the virtual guided work session daily, we would provide teachers that time as prep hour. This would allow us to have teachers teach six periods instead of the traditional five, allow us to reduce class sizes by 20% and enable greater social distancing.

Session A				Session B			
	Start	End	Minutes		Start	End	Minutes
Period 1	7:35	9:25	110	Period 4	7:35	9:25	110
Passing	9:25	9:30	5	Passing	9:25	9:30	5
Period 2	9:30	11:20	110	Period 5	9:30	11:20	110
Lunch	11:20	11:50	0	Lunch	11:20	11:50	0
Passing	11:50	11:55	5	Passing	11:50	11:55	5
Period 3	11:55	1:45	110	Period 6	11:55	1:45	110
Guided Work - Session B	1:45	2:35	50	Guided Work - Session A	1:45	2:35	50
Total Minutes			390	Total Minutes			390

3. Will students participating in face-to-face instruction be coming every day (Monday-Friday)?
Yes, students who select face-to-face instruction will meet every day of the week at all levels.
4. Will there be band, choir, and orchestra offered?
Yes, band, choir, and orchestra will all be offered. Alternative classroom settings will be used, including outdoors, when possible. Elementary orchestra will not be offered in the fall and we remain hopeful that we can begin this program after Christmas break.



2020-2021 Return to Learn Plan Frequently Asked Questions

5. Will the elementary students still have recess?

Yes, elementary students will have recess. Individual classes will go out for recess and the playground may be divided up to limit mixing of classes as much as possible. We feel it is important for the students to have time outside to play, get exercise, and be ready to learn when they re-enter their classroom.

6. Will the elementary students have 'specials' (art, music, physical education, etc)?

Yes, elementary students will have specials this year. Most of our specials are occurring in the classroom instead of moving to a different classroom for art, music, technology, and science enrichment. Weather permitting, physical education will be occurring outside in the fall.

7. Will the district offer busing? What safeguards will be in place?

Yes, busing will be offered. All students will be required to wear a face covering while on the bus. Hand sanitizer will also be available. Buses will be disinfected at the end of each run.

8. What are the precautions being taken for lunch?

Lunches at both the elementary and secondary levels will take place within the classroom. Students will not eat in the cafeteria. Boxed lunches will be available for purchase and delivered to students' classrooms.

9. Can I switch back to face-to-face if I select virtual?

Parents must select their option for the duration of Trimester 1. Students are not allowed to transition between online and face-to-face on an hourly, daily, or weekly basis.

10. Can my student take a combination of face-to-face and virtual courses?

No, parents are asked to choose one option, either face-to-face or virtual. However, parents can elect to change their choice at the end of each trimester.

11. If I select virtual learning for my children, who will be teaching it?

Virtual learning will be provided on the same learning platform as face-to-face students will be using. Armada staff will be providing the instruction and virtual students will be required to progress at the same pace as the in-person class. Virtual students will be assigned a mentor teacher that will provide guidance, answer questions, and serve as a liaison between the classroom teacher and the student.

12. What is the Empower Learning Platform?

The Empower Learning Platform is our new learning management system that will be utilized by all teachers. Login information will be sent to all students and parents at the start of the school year.



2020-2021 Return to Learn Plan Frequently Asked Questions

13. Are masks required for all students?

All secondary (grades 6-12) students are required to wear face coverings at all times during Trimester 1 and it will be re-evaluated based on the Phase the State of Michigan is in at that time.

Elementary students will not be required to wear face coverings in class, but will need to wear them while in the hallway, on the bus, and in other common areas.

14. Will the district be providing face coverings or can students bring their own?

Yes, the district will provide disposable face coverings that must be disposed of at the end of each day. Students may wear their own face coverings and they must be cleaned on a daily basis. All face coverings must cover one's mouth and nose and must follow the school dress code - no inappropriate decorations, words, or symbols can be on the masks.

15. Are parents and visitors allowed in the buildings?

Parents and visitors may pick their child up from the office, but may not go to classrooms. When parents and/or visitors come into the office face coverings are required.

16. What are the symptoms of Covid-19?

Symptoms of suspected COVID-19 include:

- Fever or chills*
- Cough*
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing*
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

* These are the most common symptoms.



2020-2021 Return to Learn Plan Frequently Asked Questions

17. What is the process in place for when a student has a suspected case of Covid-19?

Any student or staff person who either exhibits COVID-19 symptoms or has a temperature of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or higher should not go to school or any school activities. They should be instructed to get tested for COVID-19.

Any student or staff person who either exhibits COVID-19 symptoms or has a temperature of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or higher while at school or any school activity should be sent home and instructed to get tested for COVID-19.

If at school or a school activity, the student or staff person should be required to wear a face covering and wait in an isolation area until they can be transported home or to a healthcare facility.

Per the Macomb County Health Department guidelines, students with suspected cases will be referred to the office and parents will be contacted. Students who are suspected can only return with a negative COVID-19 test, or after a 14 calendar day quarantine period.

18. Will I be contacted if another student or staff member in my child's class are positive for COVID-19?

Per the Macomb County Health Department, we will contact parents of students that are in classes with confirmed cases and will be quarantining those individuals who were in close proximity of the confirmed case for a period of 14 days.

19. If a child or staff member has tested positive for COVID-19, when can they return?

Students and staff persons who never had symptoms but who test positive for COVID-19 may return to school/work if at least 10 days have passed since the date of their first positive COVID-19 test (provided no symptoms appeared during the 10-day period).

20. What will the cleaning procedures be for the schools?

Schools will be disinfected daily after school. We will be limiting access to our instructional areas after hours to enable our staff to fully sanitize each area.

21. What disinfectant will be used?

We are using BECTO, which is approved by the EPA and Green Earth for use in disinfecting schools against COVID-19.

GE Fight Bac RTU is on the EPA's List N—disinfectants recommended for use against the virus that causes COVID-19—and kills over 99.9% of bacteria and viruses in 3 to 5 minute contact time.

- Citric acid active ingredient is non-irritating with no harsh fumes for the user
- Environmentally friendly – certified by the EPA's Design for the Environment
- Cleans even glass without streaks or residue
- Hospital-grade efficacy
- GE Fight Bac RTU can also be used as a food contact sanitizer with no rinsing or wiping required