



Albany Area Schools

Return to Learning 2020-2021

Safety, Learning Models, and Other Information for Families

Superintendent's Message

Regardless of which scenario our school year starts or ends with, it is our goal to conduct each model with fidelity; ensuring that all of our students make growth in the areas of academics, the arts, and social emotional well being.

Each of these scenarios provide families a framework that instills safety for students, families and staff as well as provide structure for consistency in instruction, student and family expectations, and flexibility for families and students so that all children can reach their fullest potential during these uncertain times.

Though there are challenges ahead, and much uncertainty in the future, Albany Area Schools is dedicated to providing consistency in education and family support.

Guiding Principles



Albany Area Schools

- We will work to find the best solutions that address the health and safety of the whole child as well as the health and safety of the district staff.
- We will employ evidence-based and practice-based research to guide the decisions we make for our students and employees.
- We will work collaboratively with our stakeholders, local public health officials, and state agencies.
- We anticipate that guidance will change and, therefore, our plans need to be dynamic and responsive to the evolving nature and understanding of COVID-19.

Back to School Focus Areas



Albany Area Schools



OPERATIONS



INSTRUCTION

STAY SAFE MN

**DETERMINING
THE
LEARNING
SCENARIOS**



**PROGRAMS,
ACTIVITIES, &
EVENTS**



Albany Area Schools



Operations



OPERATIONS

MASKS AND FACE COVERINGS

- Per the Governor's executive order, people in MN are required to wear a face covering in all public indoor spaces. This includes all district buildings and transportation vehicles.
- Face coverings should completely cover nose and mouth.
- A medical exemption form is required for all face covering exemption requests, and must include certification by a physician.
- Face coverings can be removed at meal times, while outdoors when socially distanced, or while participating in a physical activity where the level of exertion makes wearing a face covering difficult.
- One cloth face mask and five disposable have been provided to the district for each student and staff member.
- Students and staff may choose to supply their own face covering.
- All visitors are required to wear a mask once they enter the building. Disposable masks are available at the front entrance.



OPERATIONS

REPORTING SYMPTOMS & EXPOSURE

- Parents will be responsible for reporting daily to the school the presence of any symptoms in students, or possible COVID-19 exposure. Quarantine requirements as outlined by the Minnesota Department of Health must be followed.
- Prior to getting on the school bus or entering the building each day, student's temperatures will be taken and a brief health screening will be conducted. This also applies to staff members and visitors.
- Any student or staff member who experiences symptoms of COVID-19 will be sent home and must comply with quarantine requirements as outlined by the Minnesota Department of Health and Albany Area Schools policy guidelines.
- Minor complaints and simple injuries will be addressed in the classroom to reduce possible transmission of COVID-19.



OPERATIONS

COVID-19 SYMPTOMS INCLUDE:

- New Onset Cough
- Shortness of Breath
- Fever of 100.4 Fahrenheit or Higher
- Chills
- Muscle Pain
- Sore Throat
- Fatigue
- Congestion
- Loss of Sense of Smell or Taste
- Gastrointestinal Symptoms of Diarrhea, Vomiting or Nausea
- Close Contact with a Household Member Exhibiting COVID-19 Symptoms or Close Contact with an Individual with a Lab-Confirmed Case of COVID-19



OPERATIONS

VISITORS

- Only students and staff should be present inside school buildings.
- Visitors will be limited to only accessing the main entrance or office areas of each school.
- While indoors, face coverings are required. All persons entering the building will be required to verify they are free of COVID-19 symptoms.
- Any communication or engagement that can be conducted outside or through electronic communication or phone should be done so, to limit the number of individuals inside school buildings.



OPERATIONS

TRANSPORTATION

- In compliance with the Minnesota Department of Education guidelines, school buses and school transportation vehicles are to carry students at 50 percent of full capacity.
- Students will be spaced as much as possible.
- All students and drivers will wear a mask while in school vehicles.
- Students who can walk to school are encouraged to do so.
- Parents who can transport are encouraged to do so and the district is currently working on an earlier drop off schedule.
- Busses will be loaded back to front.
- Windows will be left open when feasible.
- Hand sanitizer will be available on busses.
- Households/families will be required to sit together.
- Vehicles will be cleaned after each route.
- **Reminder: All families must complete the [Albany Area Schools Transportation Form](#).**



OPERATIONS

PHYSICAL SPACES

- Cleaning & Disinfecting
 - In-depth cleaning practices will be used to prevent increased exposure to COVID-19.
 - Hard-to-clean items will be removed from school spaces.
- Arranging Space for Physical Distancing
 - Plexiglass barriers will be installed at frequent face-to-face contact points
 - Floor markings will be used to support social distancing in congested spaces.
 - Directional signage will be used to improve movement through hallways.
 - All non-essential furniture is being removed from classrooms to allow for greater social distancing. Students will have assigned seats, facing the same direction.
- Ventilation
 - Systems will be operated at optimum capacity to bring in fresh air.



OPERATIONS

STAFF TRAINING AND EXPECTATIONS

TRAINING

- Current known COVID-19 facts
- Cleaning methods and schedules
- Identifying symptomatic students
- Face coverings
- Social distancing

EXPECTATIONS

- Wear a mask, face covering, or face shield
- Screen for COVID-19 symptoms in yourself and others
- Limit group gatherings
- Be prepared for shifts to distance learning if needed

STUDENTS

- All students PreK-12 will receive age appropriate instruction in the areas of COVID-19 and health & safety expectations.



OPERATIONS

HANDLING A SUSPECTED OR CONFIRMED COVID-19 CASE

INITIAL ACTIONS

- The person will be separated and kept in a designated isolation area until he/she can be picked up.
- The isolation space will be cleaned.
- MDH will be notified of confirmed cases of students or staff.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS

- If a case is confirmed, the district will follow the guidelines of MDH.
- A single standalone case may lead to distance learning for close contacts; other students may still continue to attend face-to-face.
- If the total number of absences tied to influenza or COVID-19 symptoms reaches 5% of the total number of students and staff, a transition to distance learning may take place.



OPERATIONS

SCHOOL MEALS

- CDC and MDH guidelines will be followed to assure the safe distribution of food.
- Breakfasts will be delivered to classrooms in all buildings.
- At the elementary schools, PreK and some Kindergarten classes will eat in the cafeteria. All other students will eat in their classroom.
- At the secondary building, middle and high school students will be spaced out for seating in the cafeteria and the East Gym.
- Meal delivery and pick-up spots for hybrid learning and distance learners will be established and communicated when needed.



Albany Area Schools



Instruction



Instruction

SCENARIO 1: IN PERSON LEARNING FOR ALL STUDENTS

ELEMENTARY

- Students will stay in homeroom pods
- Specialists will come to the classrooms for instruction
- Outdoor spaces will be utilized as much as possible
- Library books will be delivered to students

MIDDLE SCHOOL

- Students will remain in advisory groups as much as possible
- Consistent six-period day schedule

HIGH SCHOOL

- Students begin day in PAWS Advisory
- Schedule adjusted to limit passing time congestion
- Hallways will become one-directional to reduce congestion
- Students will carry backpacks as lockers will be unavailable until further notice



Instruction

SCENARIO 2: HYBRID LEARNING MODEL

- Students in grades K-5 will attend school daily as classrooms can meet 50% capacity and 6-foot social distancing requirements
- PreK students will attend on all regularly scheduled days
- Students in grades 6-12 will have a hybrid schedule of in-person and distance learning days

	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI
Cohort A	In Person	In Person	Distance	Distance	Distance
Cohort B	Distance	Distance	Distance	In Person	In Person

- The Hybrid Calendar for specific AA/BB days will be shared the week of August 17.
- Middle school will provide a grade-level advisory document to guide asynchronous learning on distance days
- High school students are expected to attend class through virtual connection



Instruction

SCENARIO 3: DISTANCE LEARNING/LEARN FROM HOME

ELEMENTARY

- A set schedule will be followed involving both synchronous and asynchronous learning blocks.
- Social Emotional Learning will be interwoven into the day along with a daily morning meeting and weekly lessons facilitated by our Social Work Staff.
- Student attendance will be taken and recorded daily using a pre/post morning meeting activity.

MIDDLE SCHOOL

- A set learning schedule will be followed that is specific to a student's cohort, including synchronous and asynchronous activities.
- Instruction will be guided by grade-level advisory document.

HIGH SCHOOL

- An adjusted block schedule will be followed with time for direct instruction as well as individual support time.
- Students will be marked "in attendance" when they are engaged in the live time of each class.



Instruction

Learn from Home (Individuals Opting In)

- Families have the option of distance learning for the academic school year.
- Families will opt into this model via Google Form or communication with building principal.
- By opting in, families are committing to distance learning by grading period (quarter/trimester).
- On a daily basis, students can expect 3-4 hours of instruction, learning activities, daily interaction with teachers, and grades / assessments would count towards an overall grade.
- Daily attendance is required.

Elementary Model

- Students will join their grade level classroom virtually during morning meetings and synchronous activities and work/learn independently from home during asynchronous activities.

Secondary Model

- Students will join classrooms virtually to receive synchronous instruction from teachers.



Instruction

SPECIAL EDUCATION

- Decisions regarding the programming for students receiving special education services will be made by each IEP team.
- Ongoing and systematic communication from school to staff and families will remain a high priority throughout the three scenarios.
- Access to education will be reconfigured to meet physical distancing guidance while meeting the needs of individual students.



Instruction

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL SUPPORTS

IN PERSON LEARNING

- Individual and group sessions will be available
- Districtwide focus on relationship building through homerooms and advisories

HYBRID LEARNING

- Districtwide focus on relationship building through homerooms and advisories
- Elementary students will continue to receive in-person supports
- Secondary students will have access to virtual support sessions in addition to in-person supports on days when on-site

DISTANCE LEARNING

- Districtwide focus on relationship building through homerooms and advisories
- Social workers and counselors will provide support virtually

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Albany Area Schools

Determining the Learning Scenarios

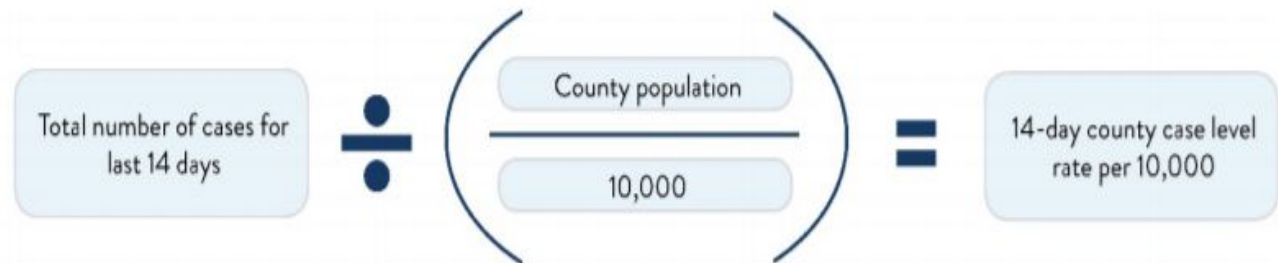
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It is important to remember that throughout the year, learning models can quickly change based on the spread of COVID-19 in our district.

In order to determine the base learning model, school districts and charter schools will be advised of the bi-weekly case rate (over 14 days) by county of residence. This data is the number of cases by county of residence in Minnesota over 14 days per 10,000 people by date of specimen collection (when a person was tested). While any increase in case incidence represents greater potential risk, schools may consider a bi-weekly case rate of 10 or more cases per 10,000 to be an elevated risk of disease transmission within the local community, especially when the level of cases per week is sustained or increasing over time.

The district will review Stearns County COVID-19 metrics when determining which of learning scenarios it will use for the upcoming weeks.

STAY SAFE MN



Recommended policy options based on 14-day case rate range

Policy Option	Range (14-day case rate per 10,000 people)
In-person learning for all students	0 to less than 10
Elementary in-person, Middle/high school hybrid	10 to less than 20
Both hybrid	20 to less than 30
Elementary hybrid, Middle/high school distance	30 to less than 50
Both distance	50 or more

For example, Stearns County's rate of infection from July 19-August 1 was 11.54 cases per 10,000, which means that Albany & Avon elementary schools would open in-person and the middle school and high school would open with hybrid instruction (option 2 on the previous chart).

This means the current plan would be for Albany Area Schools to start the school year with in-person learning for elementary school students and hybrid learning for secondary students.

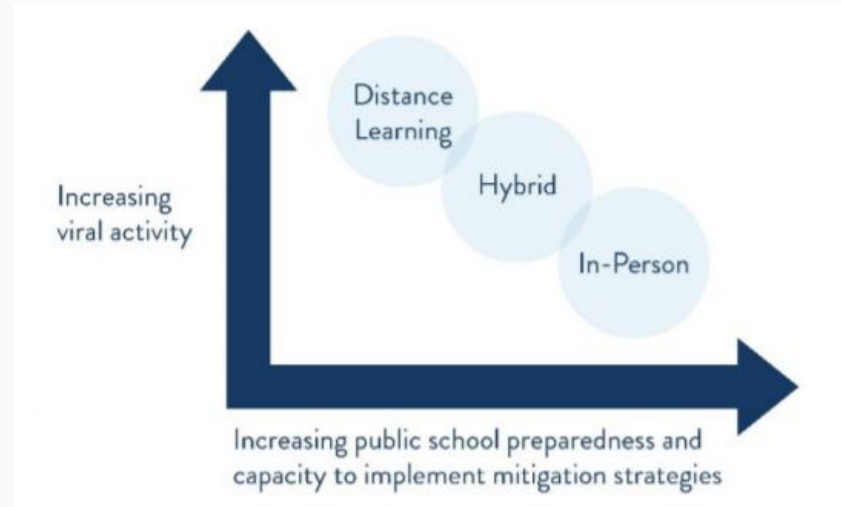
The final data determining the parameters for starting school will be shared with districts on Thursday, August 20. By Friday, August 21, the fall learning model will be made public and reported to the state.

This learning model may change as district officials monitor the COVID-19 case data closely.

STAY SAFE MN

Incident Command Team

After completing a thorough review of the base learning model in the context of the local epidemiology of COVID-19 and assessing preparedness to implement all required health practices, school districts and charter schools must make a determination of the learning model to begin the school year for each school. In making this determination, Albany Area Schools will use their incident command team or advisory council consisting of school board members, bargaining units, staff, students and families.



STAY SAFE MN

SCHOOL DISTRICT 2020-2021 CALENDAR

To effectively meet the requirements of the MN Safe Learning Plans and to ensure the health and safety of our students, changes have been made to the 2020-2021 school district calendar.

CHANGES:

- Mandatory Entrance Conferences have been added on September 8 & 9
- The first day of school for students is September 10
- Friday early outs have been removed and replaced with four at-home learning days
- There will be no school on December 23 or February 11

Please see the school district website for an updated calendar the week of August 17.



Albany Area Schools



Programs, Activities, & Events



Programs, Activities, & Events

Albany Area Schools will rely on and implement guidance from the Minnesota State High School League to safely hold athletic practices, competition and events when able.

Due to MSHSL changes, plans are currently being developed for fall activities in grades 7-12.

All field trips will temporarily be suspended until further notice

Assuming school is able to resume in an in-person or hybrid learning environment, clubs and activities may take place with physical distancing and safety measures in place.

This would also include Kids Company and other Community Education programming.

Supporting Resources and Documents

- [MN Department of Education Guidelines and Support](#)
- [Center for Disease Control Guidance](#)
- [MN Department of Health Guidance](#)
- [Stearns County COVID-19 Website](#)
- [Albany Area Schools Blueprint for Reopening School](#)



Albany Area Schools

Supporting Resources and Documents

If you have any questions or concerns, contact your child's building principal or Superintendent Johnson at:

Phone: 320-845-5055

Email: gregjohnson@district745.org

New information will be coming out as we get closer to the start of the school year. Changes and modifications may need to be made to the plan throughout the year.

We thank you for your continued trust and support as we navigate these interesting times.



Albany Area Schools