



ACSD Re-entry Plan: Safely and Successfully Reopening Schools

July 22, 2020

Dear Families,

I am writing with an update on our plans to reopen school buildings. To start the school year, ACSD, along with 16 school districts covering Addison, Chittenden, and Franklin Counties, will implement a hybrid instruction model including both on-site and off-site learning. This plan is student-centered, focused on the social-emotional and physical health and safety of our students and staff, and designed to keep students learning at a high level. Here's how the model will work.

- Students will be divided into two groups.
- Groups will attend school on-site two days a week and learn remotely three days a week.
 - Students and staff on site will wear masks and practice physical distancing.
 - Groups will be thoughtfully created to best support families, including grouping family members together whenever possible.
- All students will learn off-site on Wednesdays. We will use this day to provide individualized support to students, engage in professional learning and planning for our staff, and deep clean our buildings.
- We will provide a 100% off-site option for families uncomfortable with a physical return to school.

Nothing compares to the benefits students receive from in-person instruction. However, we feel that a hybrid model aligned with the [guidance put forth by the Vermont Agency of Education](#) (AOE) will best address the health and safety of our students and staff given the current health data available. Meanwhile, we will continue to improve our off-site instruction systems so that we can be ready to adapt if health data requires a shift to full remote learning again.

We acknowledge the hardships that hybrid and remote models may place on families, including our own faculty and staff. And we know that we will need to adapt as the situation surrounding COVID-19 evolves and we receive further guidance from the AOE and the Department of Health. That uncertainty is hard. By working together, communicating openly, and being creative and flexible, we will overcome these challenges together.

In the next two pages, you will find more information about what school will look like in the fall. At this point, we also need some information from you. Please take just a few minutes to complete the [survey](#) accompanying this letter.

We look forward to a return to school and learning. We will work hard to support your child's social and emotional needs through this transition. We are here for your children and for your family.

Sincerely,

Peter Burrows, D.Ed.

ACSD Phases of Learning

Below you will find further details of ACSD’s four-phase approach to reopening schools. Based on current State guidance and regional leadership described above, we plan to open ACSD schools at Phase 3 in the fall.

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
PHASE 4	Phase 4 is a full return to school with physical distancing, as directed by the State of Vermont. Instruction is designed for on-site learning, accommodating short and long term absences as needed.				
PHASE 3	Phase 3 opens schools to a portion of the student body. Conditions for on-site learning are driven by restrictions as directed by the State of Vermont. This includes classrooms with fewer students, altered schedules, and a mix of both on-site and off-site learning. Instruction is designed for universal access to accommodate remote learning and maximize in-person time with students.				
	While Group 1 receives on-site instruction and support, most Group 2 students participate off-site.		Planning Time for Classroom Teachers and Special Educators Off-site Learning for Students Deep Cleaning of Buildings	While Group 2 receives on-site instruction and support, most Group 1 students participate off-site.	
PHASE 2	Phase 2 allows for isolated small groups, prioritizing on-site instruction for students who may require additional support for equitable access to education. Instruction is primarily designed for off-site learning, balancing screen time with offline learning engagements.				
PHASE 1	Phase 1 is the most restrictive. In this phase, there is no in-person learning. Instruction is entirely designed for off-site learning, balancing screen time with offline learning engagements.				

Opening Schools at Phase 3

Grouping: To reduce class size and mixing, the student body will be divided in half by student last name. Group 1 will include the first half of the alphabet; Group 2, the second. Group 1 will attend school on site on Mondays and Tuesdays, Group 2 on Thursdays and Fridays. Most students will participate in school remotely three days a week. Students who struggle (students with mild to moderate disabilities; students with social, emotional, or behavioral needs; English language learners; non-readers; students otherwise at-risk) **may** be prioritized for additional on-site instruction and support. Processes and metrics will be in place to ensure equitable distribution of limited resources to meet diverse learning needs districtwide.

What will instruction look like? Instruction will involve a blended learning model (combining online and face-to-face methods) primarily designed for remote access so students can participate in school and from home. Students may receive direct instruction via short videos and engage in independent and small group work in person while at school or virtually from home. Materials required for learning will be sent home. Time at school will be maximized for interpersonal connection and personalized support. This model aims to maximize flexibility, tailor instruction to student learning needs, and accommodate unexpected absences and short-term closures.

Wednesdays: Delivering a blended learning model will require significant time for teacher planning and professional collaboration. For this reason, Wednesday will be a day for teachers to plan, meet, and collaborate to develop hybrid learning experiences for four days of the week. On Wednesdays, students will be off site

engaging in independent learning and receiving targeted instruction from educators other than classroom teachers. While the details are still to be developed, independent learning on Wednesdays may include independent reading and online or paper-based math and literacy skills practice and/or independent work assigned in class. Wednesday themes for new instruction may include personalized learning, social emotional learning, digital citizenship, etc.

What if I am not comfortable with on-site learning for my child? While we are designing our return to school plans with health and safety at the top of our minds and in alignment with official guidelines from the State, we know some families may not be comfortable with a full or partial return to in-person schooling. For this reason, parents will have the option to register students to participate entirely from home. We cannot recreate an in-person experience remotely, but this 100% off-site option aims to provide an equitable educational experience including - wherever possible - instruction in the IB curriculum delivered by ACSD educators connected to the experiences of students' on-site peers.

What is the role of parents/caregivers? Professional educators will play the lead role in delivering in-person and remote instruction. Parents/caregivers will provide support (time, space, routines) to allow students to participate, and they will communicate with teachers as needed. This may include (for younger students) reporting in on attendance and (for all students) connecting to discuss any concerns. We know that the level of structure and support required to make off-site learning work will vary by age and other factors. In all phases, as in "normal" times, the parent/caregiver is not expected to be the primary instructor, but rather a key partner on the student-teacher-parent team.

How will we meet diverse learning needs? Supporting students with diverse learning needs along with those who struggle is a priority in this and every phase. Instruction will be universally designed to meet the needs of all students and scaffolded for on-site and off-site learning. For students who struggle, classroom teachers, interventionists, special educators, and others will work together with families to leverage a variety of methods to help ensure improved student outcomes. For students who require specialized instruction as per an Individual Education Plan, special educators, SLPs, or other professional staff will continue to deliver that instruction. The instruction will be aligned with and support access to the general education curriculum. Accommodations and modifications will be developed to support on-site as well as off-site learning based on the needs of individual students and taking into account needs within the home environment. School will be different this year, and the supports and services, along with how they are delivered, will look different as well. To the greatest extent possible, specialized instruction will be delivered during on-site learning with support provided for off-site learning. We are still designing this model. More specific information will be available with the full re-entry plan.

With this letter, we have tried to paint a picture of what school will look like in the fall, so you can make decisions and let us know how your children will participate in our Phase 3 model. If you have not done so already, please do take a few minutes to complete the [survey](#). The information you provide there will let us take critical next steps in our planning process.

We know that families still have many questions. In the days and weeks ahead, we will continue finding and developing answers, and we will share more details as we have them. Finally, it is important to acknowledge that we are working in uncertain times. The model we present here is designed for flexibility, adaptability, and

smooth transitions from phase to phase. As health data and state guidelines change, we will adapt to prioritize the continued health, safety, and success of our students, families, staff, and community.