

Proposal to Postpone Full Hybrid Instruction Until Semester 2

Rev. 9/4/20

This memo has been prepared by the high school Administration, Curriculum Leaders, and Assistant Superintendent at the request of the Superintendent.

The Arlington High School Administration has been working throughout the summer to develop a plan for our students to return successfully to instruction this fall. Given the challenges created by our crowded and antiquated building, the new construction, and the evolving guidance on COVID 19, we recognized that it would be a challenge to bring large numbers of people into the building. Recently it was decided that we would start all general education courses remotely in a phased process and consider moving to a “full hybrid” model after the first quarter.

Phase 1 9/21-10/9 (14 days)	Begin remote instruction for general education Offer in-person instruction for category 1 students (identified high needs) Phase in in-person instruction for categories 2-4 in priority order Possible outdoor in-person meetings for grade 9 orientation
Phase 2 10/12-10/30 (14 days)	Continue remote instruction for general education Continue to phase-in in-person instruction as able for categories 2-4. Possible outdoor in-person meetings for general education classes
Phase 3 10/31-on	Based on epidemiology, policy, and facility information (Term 1 ends 11/23): Continue with Phase 2, or Consider capacity to adopt hybrid in-person instruction

We are eager to have students in our building again and we have worked to problem solve around many obstacles. As we have moved forward with gathering more detailed information on our ventilation, program spaces, and enrollment it has become increasingly clear that planning for “full hybrid” in the first semester is not the best course of action. It is a complicated set of interacting parts, but the bottom line is that we just can not fit a rich and diverse program into our facilities. Given all of the trade-offs, we have concluded that we can offer a better program if we plan to teach most classes remotely in the first semester, use our facilities to support identified student populations, and plan to remain in Phase 2 for the first semester.

This memo summarizes the issues that lead to this conclusion. We have provided supporting documentation to the Superintendent. We will draft detailed guidance about these plans as we move forward.

AHS took extensive steps to develop a schedule to support hybrid instruction based on classroom size limits (6 ft), usable classrooms (ventilation), and staffing the Remote Academy.

- Added 8th Period (14% more scheduling periods/classrooms available)
- Moved Physical Education, Wellness, Music, Computer Science and World Languages to remote instruction for all students (increased number of scheduling periods/classrooms available)
- Cancelled 14 courses
- Changed 14 courses to heterogeneous (combined Curriculum A and Honors)
- Moved classes to share rooms and use all space
- Reviewed, repaired, and upgraded ventilation across building (ongoing) and increased airflow rates where possible
- Ordered courtyard tents

Obstacles

- Only 52 classrooms are large enough to accommodate over 10 students
- 21 classrooms are not usable (no window/not able to restore ventilation to full functionality)
- Total seats reduced to 1612 seats with room size limits from 4055 seats
- 11 offices are not usable (no window/not able to restore ventilation to full functionality)
- Some classrooms still need repair and some remain out of service
- Gyms, Cafe, Auditorium, Old Hall still being reviewed for repair
- Construction limits outdoor spaces
- Limited space to adjust to building maintenance and construction issues
- Time is a factor in developing the scheduling options to support planning

Results

- Not enough seats for students to get their full schedules
- 1715 unfilled primary requests
- 566 unfilled core subject requests
- Need extra seats to be able to adjust students schedules (e.g. last year had open capacity of 2329 class slots; This year, no extra capacity)
- Students will not be able to change schedules if there are no spare seats available
- 168 students requested Remote Academy (result - limited course options; did not significantly open up classroom space)
- Art and FACS offerings cut by half to support hybrid program
- Most teachers moving between classes and sharing classrooms
- Limited spaces for teachers to work while not teaching
- Students in hybrid program would still be taking a high number of remote classes (Physical Education, Wellness, Music, Computer Science and World Languages)
- Remote Academy students are guaranteed only core classes with AHS teachers
- Unassigned time: $\frac{1}{3}$ students (400+ per period). With these high numbers, common spaces in the building and Open Campus are not sufficient to provide socially distanced study spaces.
- **Majority-Remote is now the best option to serve all students.**

Remote Academy Challenges

- Science will not be able to offer any electives
- Math can only staff the following courses: 1 section of Alg I, 3 sections of Geometry (heterogeneously grouped, A and H combined), 2 sections of Algebra II and 1 section of Stats A. There is potential for a Pre-Calculus class, but only if we combine Honors with A, to offer 1 Pre Calculus combined class. These courses would only satisfy a subset of the total students requesting Remote Academy. We would need to find other options for 37 additional requests in which there are not enough in each section to create a remote section. For example, we have 2 students requesting remote only for BC Calculus.

Proposal

- Set all class sizes to the usual (e.g.,25-30) rather than based on hybrid-ready size limits
- Do not enable or plan to move to full-hybrid in Semester 1
- Therefore, do not need Remote Academy to support students who cannot attend hybrid classes in Semester 1
- Plan to work toward Phase 2 of phasing proposal in Semester 1
- Continue to offer in-person options for high and moderate needs students (i.e., Special Education Programs, English Language Learners, Harbor, Workplace, Mill Brook)
- Develop in-person community building and extra-curricular opportunities, including orientation, student support, and athletics.
- Develop opportunities for in-person interaction with distance learning classes (e.g., reverse field trips, labs, outdoor meetings, fishbowl classes, mixed in-person and remote participation)
- Develop in person opportunities for student support (“Learning Center”)
- Review options for Semester 2 in November

If we are Majority-Remote what will be better?

- Removing the seat limits and Remote Academy will open classes for students
- Removing Remote Academy will allow those students who are unable to attend the hybrid to have a fully supported schedule and remain part of the whole school (inclusion)
- Option for 4 days of contact per week vs. 2 days of contact
- AABB cohorts are not necessary. Can revise to ABAB which maintains more continuous contact and supervision.
- Allows for planning to extend for entire semester vs. term
- Allows use of the building and in-person contact time to serve those students most in need
- Use of reverse field trips (e.g., labs, small group meetings, team building)
- Departments and Teacher planning groups have been training and planning for remote instruction all summer. Now the district has better digital platforms, computers, and peripherals.
- Majority-Remote reserves limited space and time for connecting with and supporting those students who are challenged by remote or hybrid (high and moderate needs).

- Full semester of a consistent structure and expectation will support greater planning, experimentation, and capacity building.

Questions

- Why are we only hearing about this now?
 - Concerns over the building space, building condition, and construction project would make it difficult to fit the program into the available space. We have been working against the constraints of the building capacity, condition, and construction.
 - Running of the final schedule was dependent on receiving information on HVAC and room availability, which was not available until August 28 and is still not complete.
 - Have run repeated schedules to adjust and accommodate the spaces as we have received new information.
 - Plan has been for flexibility and phasing to allow us to plan in spite of uncertainty. Current proposal is to stop at Phase 2 for Semester 1
- Can we do a different version of hybrid?
 - Yes, While we are not planning for a two-shift hybrid plan, our plan is to develop in-person opportunities for students
 - Develop in-person community building and extra-curricular opportunities, including orientation, student support, and athletics.
 - Develop opportunities for in-person interaction with distance learning classes (e.g., reverse field trips)
 - Develop in person opportunities for student support (Learning Center)
- What about the mental health impact of missing in-person school on students?
 - As noted above, student connections and support will be addressed through in-person activities.
 - Our teachers can create connections and engagement through remote instruction. The current model will have daily teacher contact, advisory, and extracurricular activities.