

District Plan for Resilient Pandemic Recovery and Reconnection

[DRAFT]

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Superintendent of Schools
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Process

- Weekly 90-minute Meetings on Tuesdays, starting July 20th
- Priority-setting, drafting, and feedback on sections in subcommittees
- Revision and editing by Central Office Team
- Weekly meetings with principal teams to ensure consistency of implementation
- Initial draft August 12th
- Revisions August 12-20th
- Final Approval August 24th if required

Acknowledgements



Thank you to the:

1. 11 teachers,
2. 4 health professionals,
3. 22 family members,
4. 42 administrators, and
5. 2 community members

Who have contributed to the priority setting, drafting, and revision of this plan.

This Team Acknowledges that:

1. **Learning and teaching experiences were significantly impacted**, and impacted in different ways, for our students.
2. **Families were challenged with new and different responsibilities**, and were required to juggle many demands related to their children's social and academic learning with more limited resources.
3. **Arlington Public Schools teachers and staff were required to do their jobs in dramatically different ways.**

Priorities for a Resilient Recovery



1. **All students will have access to equitable, inclusive and safe learning environments** that uphold COVID-19 safety measures and protocols; support the mental, social and emotional health of students and staff; value diversity as an asset to learning and community; and promote social justice, healing and joy.
2. **Educators will collaborate, communicate, and partner with students and families** to foster (re)connection and ensure a sense of belonging and community for all students, families, and staff.
3. **The APS will build upon and refine a flexible system** to ensure all students are challenged and receive the academic, social, and emotional support necessary to thrive and succeed.

Communication with the Community



District Online Family
Forums on 8/19
6:30-8pm, 8/25 and 8/30
7pm-8:30pm.

All Forums Live-streamed in English,
Japanese, Chinese, Spanish,
Portuguese, and American Sign
Language at:

[https://stream.lexikeet.com/
arlington.k12.ma.us](https://stream.lexikeet.com/arlington.k12.ma.us)

School	Date	Time
Menotomy	September 2nd	5:30-6:30
Bishop	September 1st	6:30-7:30
Brackett	August 30th	6:30-7:30
Dallin	September 1st	5:30-6:30
Hardy	August 30th	5:30-6:30
Peirce	September 1st	5:30-6:30
Stratton	August 26th	5:30-6:30
Thompson	August 26th	6:30-7:30
Gibbs	August 31st	6:30-7:30
Ottoson	September 2nd	6:30-7:30
AHS	August 31st	5:30-6:30

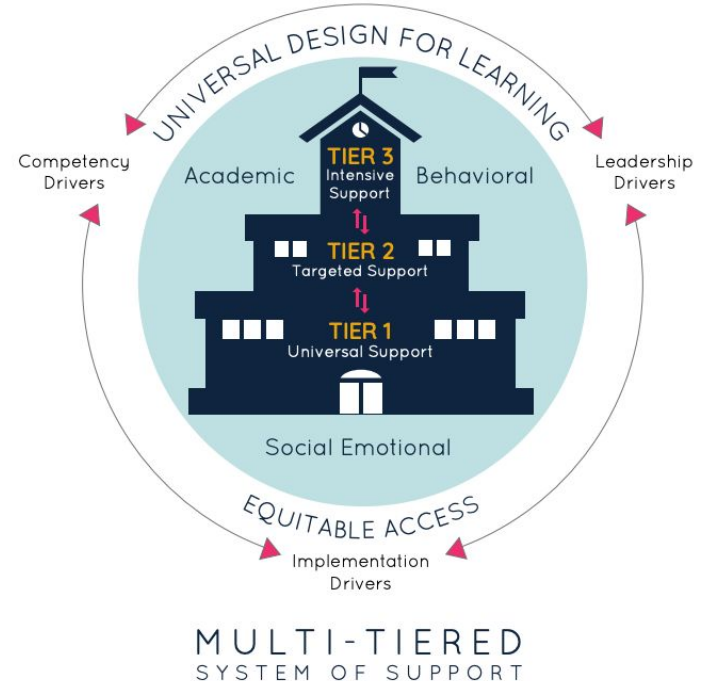
Core Instruction for All Students



Frameworks to Guide Core Instruction in 2021-22:

1. [Multi-Tiered Systems of Support](#)
2. [DESE Acceleration Roadmaps](#)
3. [Universal Design for Learning](#)
4. [CASEL Social and Emotional Core Competencies](#)

The Core Instruction Subcommittee identified four domains needed to support a high quality robust tier-one instruction program: Collaboration, Data-Informed Practice, Curriculum and Instruction, and Professional Development.



Academic and SEL Supports for All Students



1. First Six Weeks Focus on building positive relationships with all students.
2. Use of tools and assessments to understand needs of students, such as:
 - a. Mental health screeners (grades 3-12)
 - b. Early literacy screeners and assessments (DIBELS, grades K-3)
 - c. Standards-based grade-level curriculum assessments (PreK-12)
3. Support plans as necessary to identify and provide necessary supports and timelines for implementation. Examples of supports listed at right, and [examples of the types of data](#) teachers may use to inform instruction are included here.

An example of the different types of support strategies teachers may use to meet student needs include, ***but are not exclusive to***, the following:

Academic Supports:

- Graphic organizers
- Breaking down directions into smaller steps
- Scaffolding assignments
- Small group/one-on-one instruction
- Explicit modeling of assignments
- Picture/Visual cues
- Extended time for submitting assignments

Social and Emotional Supports:

- Provide a “cool down”/”Break”/”Calming Space
- Provide a social story
- Cue student prior to transitions
- Provide student with a visual schedule for the day
- Provide student with frequent breaks
- Use role playing to teach appropriate behavior
- Practice transition routines

Supportive Start for All Students



Orientations for New and 2020-21 Remote Students

- Messaged by schools
- Late August and Early September

Connection Opportunities for ALL K-8 Students and Families

- Details to be shared by schools
- Students and families to receive a welcome or connection opportunity with teachers before the first day

Focus on embedding competencies of self-awareness and relationship skills in all content areas, PreK-12.

The First 6 Weeks

- Introduce students to the people of the classroom and school community
- Introduce and establish expectations for behavior, the limits we will set, and the ways we will enforce those limits.
- Teach the schedule and routines of the school day
- Introduce students to the physical environment and the materials of the classroom and the school, and teach students how to use and care for them.
- Plan time for school tours, scavenger hunts , and mapping exercises to encourage them to get acquainted or re-acquainted with and comfortable in the school environment.
- Establish expectations about ways we will learn together in the year ahead.

Health and Safety Protocols



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- **Masking**
 - **Vaccinations**
 - **Pooled Testing**
 - **Distancing and Cohorting**
 - **Ventilation and Air Purification**
 - Illness Protocol
 - Quarantine
 - Travel
 - Sanitizing Spaces and Supplies
 - Handwashing and Sanitization
 - Meals and Nutrition
 - Transportation

Masking Recommendation



The Arlington Public Schools will require indoor masking for all teachers and students PreK-12 to start the 2021-22 school year, regardless of vaccination status. This recommendation aligns with the [CDC](#) and neighboring communities and allows us to confidently provide a safe and equitable start to the school year.

Parameters to be considered when re-assessing masking requirements will include, ***but are not limited to:***

- Student and staff vaccination rates of at least 90% for those students and staff who are able to be vaccinated.
- Low sustained prevalence of COVID-19 in Arlington, the state of Massachusetts, and our schools, as defined by the Town of Arlington Department of Health and Human Services.
- Participation of at least 90% of students and staff across all schools in COVID-19 pooled testing, regardless of vaccination status.

Vaccinations



The Arlington Public Schools will not require COVID-19 vaccinations for students or staff at the start of the 2021-22 school year; however, this is subject to change. The APS will require the confidential disclosure of vaccination status for students and staff.

The APS is committed to supporting both COVID-19 and flu vaccination efforts at all schools, and will continue to partner with the Arlington Department of Health and Human Services and neighboring communities to provide vaccinations for our eligible community members. APS will coordinate COVID-19 vaccination clinics as soon as our students under the age of 12 are eligible for vaccination, and we encourage any unvaccinated individual over the age of 12 to call the Department of Health and Human Services at (781) 316-3170.

Pooled Testing



We must acquire parental consent for participation in COVID-19 pooled testing for the new school year.

The following steps are critical to ensure the success of this program:

- **All new and returning families must set up their PowerSchool Portal Accounts.** This platform contains the Returning Student Update Forms that contain the consent for Pooled Testing. Families should please call their child's school if they need help accessing their Portal Accounts.
- **All new and returning families must complete their Returning Student Update Forms NO LATER THAN SEPTEMBER 1st, 2021.** In addition to ensuring that we have the most up-to-date contact information for students, these forms include a consent form for Pooled and Rapid COVID-19 Testing. We strongly encourage all families to participate in the APS Pooled Testing Program.

Last school year, APS required high school athletes to participate in pooled testing; **athletes will continue to be required to participate in pooled testing** for as long as we maintain the program. Parents of athletes must complete the RSU and consent to COVID-19 Pooled Testing Participation in order for their child to participate in AHS sports.

Distancing and Cohorting



1. This school year, the APS will return to instruction that engages students in collaborative conversation and problem-solving. **We will *not* require that students remain in desks a specified distance apart and facing forward.** Teachers may return to flexible seating arrangements and the use of rugs and collaborative materials in their classrooms.
2. Some cohorting measures will be in place **at the PreK-6 level only** during lunches:
 - a. Students will have assigned seats with members of their class/LC.
 - b. Classes/LCs will be separated by a minimum of 6'.
 - c. Outdoor lunches will be an option as often as possible.
3. Students will be allowed to play, unmasked, with students from other classes outdoors during recess.
4. Outdoor instruction will be prioritized in instances where removal of masks is instructionally beneficial, including for Speech and Language services, early literacy instruction, choir and instrumental music, and world language instruction.
5. There will be no distancing or cohorting in grades 7-12.

Ventilation and Air Purification



Last school year's ventilation and purification protocols will remain in place:

- 4-6 air exchanges are recommended per hour.
- Most student classrooms have wall univents that pull outdoor air directly into the classroom at 4-6 air exchange rates / hour.
- These univents are equipped with MERV-13 filters that will be changed in August, December, and April.

Additional layers of ventilation and purification:

- Austin Air purifiers in all student-occupied spaces.
- Ability to assess any space about with educators have concerns.
- Windows will be open as often as possible, weather and temperature permitting.

Illness Protocol



Students who are ill or show symptoms of COVID-19 should stay home, and parents should call the school to report the student's absence. Symptoms of COVID-19 include the following:

- Fever (100.0° Fahrenheit or higher), chills, or shaking chills
- Cough (not due to other known cause, such as chronic cough)
- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Muscle aches or body aches
- Nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea
- Headache, when in combination with other symptoms or new onset (ie: no previous history of migraines)
- Fatigue, when in combination with other symptoms
- Nasal congestion or runny nose (not due to other known causes, such as allergies) when in combination with other symptoms

Any student with these symptoms should **not** be sent to school and should be taken to a healthcare provider and COVID-19 testing site. Students may return to school when they have had a negative COVID-19 antigen or PCR test (recommended), AND are fever-free for 24 hours without Tylenol or Ibuprofen, AND are feeling better.

Quarantine and Travel



We expect all families to adhere to [current state and international travel guidelines](#). Families and students who return from travel to high-risk areas are encouraged to take additional precautions, such as testing after travel or precautionary masking after travel.

We anticipate updated guidelines on quarantining from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education soon; pending further updates, the following quarantine procedures, which are aligned to current quarantine guidelines from Massachusetts Department of Public Health, will be in place to start the 2021-22 school year:

- Asymptomatic close contacts will have the option to remain in school, masked while indoors, and be tested daily with BinaxNOW for at least 5 days.
- Vaccinated staff and students will not be required to quarantine; however, close contacts of a case will be required to mask for 5 days and test on day 5.
- Students and staff who test positive are required to quarantine for ten days following the positive test.

Sanitizing Hands, Spaces, Supplies



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- Hand sanitizer will be readily available in all classrooms and common areas for student and teacher use.
 - Handwashing and sanitizing will be implemented upon arrival in the morning, prior to snacks and lunches, and as students return to the building from recesses or other outdoor activities. Students will be encouraged to wash or sanitize their hands frequently throughout the day.
 - Sanitizing wipes will be available to all teachers to use at their discretion on high-touch surfaces.
 - Custodians will perform routine cleaning with attention to sanitization of high-touch surfaces throughout the school day, as well as at the end of the day.
 - In the event of a case of COVID-19 in a classroom, sanitizing mist will be broadly applied in classroom spaces that the infected individual occupied.

Meals and Nutrition



Elementary Schools and Gibbs (PreK-6):

- Students will eat with their cohort/class/Learning Community.
- Outdoor eating will be implemented as often as possible.
- Students will be assigned seats in the cafeteria.
- Students will sit with other students from their classes when eating indoors.
- 6' of distance will be maintained between students from different classes/Learning Communities when eating indoors.

Ottoson and Arlington High School:

- Students will have the option to eat outdoors as often as possible, weather permitting.
- Arlington High School: opportunity for open-campus lunch, more details about the implementation of Open Campus to follow.

Transportation



Transportation will be available to students according to our usual district policies and procedures, with the following health and safety measures in place:

- All students and drivers must wear masks while on the bus.
- Windows will be open on all days when the weather conditions allow.
- Students will receive an assigned seat at the start of the year in order to facilitate contact tracing.
- High-touch areas on busses will be sanitized in between runs of separate groups of students. All busses will be sanitized at the end of each route (2x/day).