



A Summary of Questions from the July 23, 2020 Parent Meeting on School Reopening Almont Community Schools

Will there be a hybrid option?

Not at this time.

Will outside extracurricular groups like scouts still be allowed to use rooms in the school buildings for meetings?

Provided that these groups comply with all appropriate protocols, they may.

Will 5th graders be following the MS guidelines or the K-5 guidelines?

MS guidelines but Administrators will communicate this.

How are drop-offs/pick-ups going to change? I anticipate more people doing this.

We will adjust as we go. The new OP parking lot will make things much easier and Mr. Zieglowsky will work with Officer Manning on flow at the MS.

How will traffic in hallways be managed to reduce interaction?

Possibly stricter adherence to one side of the hall but this will be worked out at building level.

I wanted to know if pre-k is being offered in distance learning?

Will be meeting with PK staff in the next week. Will see if the curriculum is conducive to online learning.

Any discussion around a third option of combined online and in person? Perhaps 2 days in person and 2 online?

Not at this time. Not really practical for a district our size. Loose consistency this way and our kids are already behind because of the closure in the spring.

If we choose virtual for the first semester, will we re-surveyed for second semester ?

Not necessarily resurveyed but you will have the option to face to face semester 2.

How will we know if our child is exposed if names are not released?

The health department will notify the school of positives and talk to school personnel to do the trace back. Anyone who meets the criteria of closer than 6 feet for 15 minutes will be contacted.

Are teachers going to be given microphones?

We are looking into this at OP. They have a system but it currently does not work. Will have to do some investigating.

What plans will the district make regarding substitute teachers, staffing? health protocol? multiple school exposure?

Subs- are a concern. Possibly looking at hiring permanent subs for each building.

Staffing – may be able to bring back a 4th and 5th grade teacher to replace retirements.

Health protocols – discussed above.

Will sports such as volleyball that are played indoors will be allowed in phase 4?

Not at this time. Still waiting for direction on additional guidance from the state and MHSAA on items such as crowd size as well.

Are you doing anything different for the seniors in regards to capstone and SATs

This will be state mandated. The state superintendent asked that all state testing be put off except SAT.

Is there any thought to start school after Labor Day? This may give us one more week to be safer.

Two thoughts:

- 1. Going earlier will give us more days of instruction if we have to close in November for a second wave.*
- 2. Gets us back sooner after being off so long. No one in Lapeer County has changed to after the holiday.*

Wondering about Band?

We are having Band and Choir. Have met with Adam Wetzel to discuss protocols. He is also closely following his professional organizations for guidance. Social distancing can be achieved by using the auditorium and we have large band rooms at both buildings. Band camp is taking place. There will be port-a-johns for students and plenty of hand sanitizer.

Does the 100 people criteria for football games include players cheer and band?

Waiting for state guidance on this.

If the school's heating system is forced air, how do you plan to stop infected air from being transported from room to room?

The health department has no requirements for ventilation controls. It is not considered a priority for school safety.

If there is a positive case and they need to stay home, you mentioned having to rely on online but do they do the other online or online with their class?

The would use the Edgenuity modules that will align with their class curriculum.

I am wondering if you have heard from the governor about the impact of increased cases, but low clinical relevance as we are not seeing an uptick of hospitalizations and/or deaths. I am wondering how this impacts decisions?

We are following the Return to School Road Map and Executive Orders. We can move to a less restrictive plan when we move to Phase 5.

If there is a confirmed case of COVID-19 in my child's class can I change to virtual learning.

Yes, you can. I would encourage that parents do not go back and forth with these options but if a student is scared this might be the best option.

If my child needs speech therapy and we do online, how will he get the therapy he needs?

This will be a question for our CEC and school principals.

Will OP kids have recess outdoors?

Yes, they will. Might incorporate quadrants, social distancing, and there will be hand sanitizing.

Many school districts including UCS (the second largest district in our state) turned down Edgenuity and are placing the instruction directly into the hands of the district's teachers. Why doesn't Almont feel their teachers can handle the curriculum?

Our teachers will be doing face to face during the day. We cannot ask them to also do online at the end of the day as well. Bigger districts can assign staff to just their online learning curriculum we are not big enough for that. There are advantages to smaller districts, and disadvantages, just like there are for large districts. This is one such example.

How will the Lapeer County Educational and Technical Center students continue in both plans?

Ed Tech will run face to face. Students will be screened when they get there. They can do it if they are face to face with us or using our online option. They can ride our bus if online and will be screened before getting on the bus.

Will class sizes be reduced?

Class sizes may be smaller depending on the number of students that do the online. We do not have the option to reduce class size. Not enough rooms or staff.

If you are counting on parents to screen students before coming each day, is there any way for them to report that they have done so each day? (One of the Big 3 has implemented a daily survey that must be completed before coming to work each day)

Our staff will be using an online tool but families will be tasked with doing this each day on their own. There will be a bridge of trust between the school and families to not send sick students.

Dr. Kalmar, can you advise about the cleaning in the classrooms as it should be done every few hours. Will this function be performed by the teachers and students or will the building custodian be cleaning the classrooms throughout the day?

Teachers will be cleaning the tables after each hour that the kids change classes. This may increase the passing time. Custodians will be cleaning high touch areas throughout the day. We will have one custodian at each building while students are present.

What is the date parents need to decide for traditional or on-line specific education needs to happen?

Mid-August or sooner (especially at the HS)

Under emergency order currently those children five and up need to be wearing a mask. so how does that effect OP?

The Back to School Roadmap says it is strongly suggested. We are following the Roadmap. The Executive Orders do not trump the Roadmap when it comes to schools.

Will there be "mask breaks" during the day?

This would be a building decision. Would be good for the students to start building up their mask wearing stamina before returning to school.

Will fall sports still be in the fall and spring sports in the spring, no switching?

No switching. The MHSAA would like to keep them the same even if they have to shorten the season.

With the cases of COVID-19 trending up, are there any talks of delaying the start of the year, like other districts, to see what phase we may be in come September?

Not at this time.

As you had your meeting last evening with your teachers. What has been the recommendations by the teachers for changes or alternative plans to offer?

We have already been adding the recommendations of the teachers into the plans. Additionally, they will be meeting with their administrators to discuss building level guidelines.

If a student stays home because of a belly ache or headache; will that result in a test for COVID-19?

Something you/we typically don't go to the doctors for?

As with any illness this would be a case by case basis and a decision of the parent and your pediatrician. You best know your child.

Is there a way to do live in class ZOOM?

We have not explored this. This is not part of the online option which is Edgenuity.

What about lockers?

MS and HS will have their own. The OP will be challenging. They will be working on a plan for this.

For distance learning, will they be required to be on so many hours a day? Also, will assignments be due the next day or at the end of the week?

No daily hourly requirement. Assignments will be self-paced but have deadlines. Online classes will also have grades.

How will social distancing look on buses?

They will not SD. They will wear masks.

What are the requirements for teachers wearing a mask? Do they also get a medical exception and do they need a physician note as well?

They will be wearing masks and yes would need a doctor's note.

If a student is diagnosed with COVID-19 during the school day will we be able to get our kids that day without a test or will they be required to stay there until they are tested?

We are not testing the kids at school for COVID-19. If they are sick we would call you to pick them up.

How many students have verified positive cases in Almont schools?

None

Will the middle school be staying in a cohort or moving through different class groups?

7th and 8th move from class to class each hour. 5th and 6th move less.

Dr. Kalmar mentioned working with other local districts/ISD on developing the plan. Are those districts following the same plan as ACS? Looking forward to our kids joining their friends at school!

Plans are similar in some ways. ACS is lucky to be one to one technology so we are ahead of many other schools.

If I'm understanding this correctly, if I choose virtual learning, my child will have a teacher from Almont Schools facilitating on Edgenuity. If that is correct, will that same person be teaching my child in person if we decide to resume traditional learning?

Yes.

If a student signs up to be taught virtually for one semester, can they reevaluate after that semester and determine if they want to continue doing virtual learning or move to traditional?

Yes.

How will gym be offered to our OP kids and will they be required to wear a mask during physical activity?

Masks are not required when doing exercise if they social distance.

If we opt to do online learning, and later on we go into Phase 5, will our child have any difficulty transitioning to in person learning, curriculum-wise? Also, will online learning allow participation in specials like band and art?

There should not be a problem transitioning. Edgenuity may offer specials but we will be looking at more closely at this during the next few weeks.

What are the protocols for the AMS special education students?

This is a CEC question and may depend on the students IEP

With the EdGenuity - is there any option for the teacher to include a zoom for those that are distance learning?

No. Teachers are support for the students during office hours.

If a student struggles in a subject, can they be present for that subject only and then the rest in an online setting?

Have not discussed this. Would have to be considered on a case by case basis. It is challenging to offer dozens of individual scheduling options and meet pupil accounting mandates.

How would you handle children that do not keep the masks on or refuse to use the masks or not using the masks properly?

Two different scenarios.

- 1. Not wearing properly would be handled by teaching the student how to wear the mask.*
- 2. Being defiant will not be tolerated. If a student refuses to wear a mask the online option will be best for them. We will not be the mask police. We must follow the state mandates to remain open.*

Is the hard copy module text books or copied papers?

Online option is audio/visual

There may be some hard copies it will depend on the grade level.

How will delay in test results be handled? how will sick days be handled - as absences?

COVID-19 absences will have different rules.

What will the lunch room look like (distancing) since students do not have to wear a mask (while eating).

They will be spread out as much as possible. Specifics will be handled at the building level

If a student tests positive will anyone they have come in close proximity to have to quarantine for 14 days or only if they show symptoms?

They should quarantine until they have testing results.

Will there be COVID-19 testing done on students at school

No.

Is there a plan for staggered start within one building to avoid crowding at doors opening?

No. Will look at this as we go.

Are there any MS teachers that won't be returning to school due to COVID 19?

Not that we are aware of.

Can you speak to how this year's virtual learning looks different than last years on an interaction level?

Last year was no grades, no truancy, no training. This year there will be grades, truancy, and more accountability on the student's part. Teachers will be for support during office hours. Parents are primary support for student.

Dr. Kalmar, on July 8, 2020 - the MASB had a meeting titled Views from the Capital. In this meeting, Mary Gebara, a trustee of the Okemos Public Schools Board of Education - who was on the council for the MI Safe Schools Roadmap states: that the strongly recommended should be taken as required - -Why are we not considering in the Spacing, Movement and Access Area on page 23 of the MI Safe Start Return to School document, In the Strongly Recommended area – first bullet point of: Space desks six feet apart in classrooms. Class sizes should be kept to the level afforded by necessary spacing requirements? Would a Hybrid model be an option to start with to keep the students and staff safe?

With all due respect to Mary Gebara, this is one member of the advisory council's opinion of how to interpret a document. If "strongly recommended" was meant to be "required" than the plan should read as such.

If we choose to do in person learning and we get shutdown again what happens with our kids? We would have to enroll them in virtual training late?

All the students would move to the online learning option.

With the added expenses of PPE, custodians, and compliance with state/federal safety regulations, how is the district handling any budget issues/shortfalls and what might need to be cut to accommodate this?

We are receiving COVID-19 specific dollars that are being used for these items

If a face mask is initially provided; will an initial face shield be provided?

No students will be wearing face masks which are not interchangeable with a face mask.

If OP starts later because of bus cleaning will kids club stay open later to accommodate parents who leave after kids get on the bus in the morning?

Yes.

If we choose the online option for OP, it appears that our children will have less instruction by an Almont teacher compared with this past year during crisis teaching. Why is that? Is this something that you can re-explore?

We could only do this if the online numbers let us assign an online only teacher. This is not in the plan at this time.

If a class needs to be quarantined, then do their siblings in other grades also need to be quarantined as well?

A whole class should not have to be quarantined based on the guidelines, but if a student has to be quarantined then siblings will most likely need to follow the same protocol if living in the same house.

How can we as parents help the school with our preschoolers keeping on their masks? I know my 4-year-old son struggles with keeping on his mask and I don't what this to be a difficulty for his teacher. thank you your help and suggestions!

Preschool teachers will be good resources for this. Younger students will be challenged with mask wearing.

I believe you mentioned later start times at OP, is the end time changing as well?

They may we will keep parents apprised of any changes in start and end times.

If kids fall behind because of being sick or not managing well with learning, will they be retained or made to do summer school?

Retention is not a good idea after second grade. We may have to look into a summer school option for these children.

How many people were involved in the making of this plan, were teachers opinions and views considered and used to create it as they are representing not only themselves and their working environment but our kids and their learning environment? Along those same lines, Governor Whitmer as stated that the roadmap was made so that each individual district could make a plan that works best for them and it would lie on the school boards to decide which of the recommendations and strong recommendation we follow, not just the mandates. So how many of those recommendations will be implemented? And was the school board involved in the making of this plan, as it was said in an earlier slide that the plan hasn't been presented to them yet. To follow both of those- is this a flexible plan that you are willing to change based off of this community forum?

The BOE has been involved as well as the administrators, teachers and department heads. We have already made changes to the document based on this input. After this meeting we will incorporate suggestions from parents as well.

As you are relying on the parents to use common sense on sending their children to school daily. IF there is a time where a child is sick and out of school for a period of time how will the truancy be addressed and how will it be handled?

This will be state mandated. If they are sick for an extended time they should be using the online option if possible.

What is being done to address the mental health of staff? If they are struggling they are won't be able to help our children.

There is a PD planned before school starts that will focus on both student and staff mental health as well as self-care.

What will happen with Ed-Tech and High school students attending early college classes Ed-Tech discussed above?

This should be addressed to the HS counselor for more information.

How will Title One support be implemented online and in-person?

Building level plan

Will AP classes and/or dual-enrollment classes still be available for high school students?

Yes.

Should my child come down with the common cold or flu and fever, will a doctor's note be required to return to the classroom?

This would be case by case. There are plenty of common illnesses which are not COVID-19. In this pandemic, it may be prudent to consult your child pediatrician more frequently than you might typically.

Will virtual students be required to do daily check ins with teacher?

No. But there will be guidelines to meet. Will be weekly.

Will Edgenuity be offered full school year even if we are post pandemic, if not when will ACS determine if it will continue?

Yes, it will be available all year.

What are the guidelines (frequency per building, who will clean, what will be used for cleaning supplies) for cleaning the classrooms? Which model will be used for preschool, since they are housed in the middle school?

We will follow the state guidelines for cleaning – 4 hours for high touch areas, etc. We can get a list of brands of products if someone wants it but we are using products that meet the mandates. Preschool will follow PS guidelines. Masks in common areas, clean room at end of day or when switching.

If we go back to phase 3 and we choose traditional schooling, will our Almont teachers continue education via distance learning?

Yes

School pictures?

We have not discussed school pictures. Our vendors will have protocols.

Am I understanding correctly that if my child is exposed and I'm contacted by the Health Dept. I'm required to take my child for testing and he/she is not able to return to school until we've received a negative result?

Yes

What will AMS & AHS students do in the halls while classrooms are cleaned in between each change? Wont that cause more problems in the halls?

This will be a building level decision.

How will bathroom breaks be handles? Will there be assigned times for CLASS BREAKS?

This will be a building level decision.

Can we look into a thorough screening process for students before coming to school? It will be difficult to trust that all parents will do this on a daily basis.

We have to have a trusting relationship. There are time and logistical restraints to this. That said we are meeting with a vendor that has walk up thermometers.

Why would it not better if the teachers are going to the students. And Students stay in one classroom.

At the high school, 7th and 8th grade the students do not travel with the same classmates. This may be an option for BK-4 and was suggested by a teacher during the teacher meetings.

When are the teachers' designated office hours for virtual learners? During the school day or in the evening?

During their prep periods which will vary teacher by teacher.

A lot of these questions need to be directed at each buildings principals. They are not really questions for the super. will there be a zoom meeting to run ideas with each buildings principle?

The principals will be back in August. They will be communicating with their families after that get back and have been able to work the details out.

Will the 3rd graders still move classrooms for social studies/science or will the teacher come to them, similar to the specials?

Building level decision but this has come up as an option in the teacher meetings.

For the OP students, if we go back to Phase 3, will the Chromebooks be assigned at the beginning of the year or will you wait until we are required to distance learning?

At the time of distance learning.

Will there be strength class at high school?

Yes, with modifications as per the requirements of the Roadmap.

Do a certain percentage of kids need to be enrolled for in person school for the school to stay open? If say 90% of students were to choose online would the school still stay open for face to face?

Can't speculate on this. Would have to rework plan.

My football players were given Raider neck gaiters; my teens wear them much easier than traditional masks. Can they be made available for the rest of the student body?

We could look into having them available for purchase, we will not be supplying them however.

Will extracurricular activities such as the daddy daughter dance still occur, similar for homecoming and prom.

Not until we go to Phase 5

You mentioned not having kids move from school to school for certain activities... How will this be addressed for kid's club with OP and AMS students?

They will need to do this and we will be meeting with the latchkey manager to set the protocols.

As parents, what can we do to help the schools with all the extra tasks and demands being required on staff. Any volunteering in or out of school, etc.

The best thing you can do is get your students ready for school. Make sure they have a positive mindset, are ready to wear a mask all day, keep them healthy and help them develop mask stamina by wearing a mask for extended time before coming back.

When we submit if we are sending our kids to school, are you also going to be asking about sending kids on the bus? Meaning, if we choose not to send our kids on the bus and to drive them in, is there a way to notify someone ahead of time?

This is a great idea and could be added to the form.

I'd just like to say I've very impressed and pleased with Dr. Kalmar's leadership and presence tonight. Thank you for your work on behalf of our students.

Thank you!

Will there still be meet the teacher at OP?

Yes, but we are not sure how this will happen yet.

Will there be bussing to ED Tech or can students drive there?

This will be a question for Ed-Tech administration (Dr. Moore).

Is there any way for internet to be provided to those who cannot get internet because we can't get it?
If it is not available at your home no. We have expanded the internet in our parking lots outside the building. If it's a matter of cost that is a different matter that we can help with.

Would you consider adding back in a second recess so children can get out of the classroom more?
Yes, this is under consideration.