

## Return to School Roadmap: Frequently Asked Questions

*Updated: July 28, 2020*

On Tuesday, June 30, Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer released the *Return to School Roadmap* for the 2020-21 school year. The plan, created by the COVID-19 Task Force on Education and the Governor’s Return to School Advisory Council, lays out, in detail, the requirements and recommendations for the re-opening of Michigan school districts by phase.

In this document, we will answer many of the questions that are being asked regarding the return to school. ***Please bear in mind that the questions and answers in this document are specific to Phase 4 re-opening***, which is the current status of southeast Michigan including Lapeer County. If the status of our region were to change, the requirements and recommendations would also change (more or less stringent).

This document will be updated on a regular basis, as new information and guidance related to the re-opening of schools is released at the federal, state and local levels. We ask for your patience as we navigate this very challenging time.

*This FAQ is divided into three areas: General, Elementary Level and Secondary Level.*

| Question   | Answer   |
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| <b>General Questions</b>   |  |
| Is the District permitted to return students to in-person instruction in the 2020-21 school year with traditional class sizes? | Yes.   |
| Is the District required to follow health and safety protocols from the State of Michigan in order to re-open?                 | Yes. The District is required to follow the health and safety protocols laid out in the Return to School Roadmap published by Governor Whitmer on June 30, 2020. |
| What phase of re-opening is the District in as of July 16, 2020?   | Phase 4  |

| Question  | Answer  |
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| <p>What is the status of viral spread in Phase 4?</p>   | <p>Generally, Phase 4 means that new cases and deaths have fallen for a period of time, but the overall level of cases is still high. In this phase, the region has adequate testing, tracing and hospital capacity to handle new outbreaks. Even so, distancing and mask-wearing is still necessary to impede the spread of the virus.</p> |
| <p>What guidance does the Roadmap offer?</p>  | <p>The Roadmap is 63 pages of very specific guidance for every facet of a school district (instruction, governance, communication, family support, professional learning, technology, transportation, food service, etc.) It offers guidance at three levels for six phases: Requirements, Strong Recommendations and Recommendations.</p>  |
| <p>Does Phase 4 allow face-to-face, in-person instruction?</p>  | <p>Yes. All school districts in phases 4-6 are permitted to resume face-to-face instruction when certain safety protocols are met.</p>  |
| <p>What happens if the region progresses to Phase 5 or regresses back to Phase 3?</p>                     | <p>Each phase is marked by more or less stringent guidelines. Phase 5 would be less restrictive and Phase 3 would be more. For example, Phases 1-3 do not allow for in-person instruction while Phase 5 allows in-person instruction with only moderate safety requirements.</p>  |
| <p>What if our region returns to Phase 3?</p>   | <p>If the region is moved back to Phase 3, all students would return to full-time virtual learning.</p>   |
| <p>If the region returns to Phase 3, would the year-round calendar be impacted?</p>                       | <p>Update: See question below.</p>  |
| <p>Could the year-round calendar be suspended if the District believes a return to Phase 3 is likely?</p> | <p><b>The year-round calendar has been suspended for the 2020-21 school year.</b></p>   |

| Question  | Answer  |
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| What would the virtual learning instruction plan look like in Phase 3?        | Students who were enrolled for traditional in-person instruction for the 2020-21 school year would receive access to virtual instruction five days per week. Instruction would continue to be delivered by LCS teachers, presenting the curriculum and content through daily lessons and activities via Google Classroom, Zoom and Google Meet discussions. |
| What are some of the health and safety requirements laid out in Phase 4?      | The District is required to support healthy hygiene behaviors with the necessary supplies including soap and hand sanitizer. In addition, the District is required to clean facilities and buses more frequently and thoroughly with special attention paid to frequently-touched surfaces.   |
| Does Phase 4 require students and staff who are medically able to wear masks? | In Phase 4, students in grades 6-12 and staff must always wear masks (except while eating). K-5 students must wear masks <i>unless they remain with their classes throughout the school day and do not come into close contact with students in another class. The District will make every effort to accommodate this exception.</i>                       |
| What about students younger than five years old?                              | Students younger than five are not required to wear masks but are strongly encouraged to do so.   |
| Are all visitors required to wear masks in the building?                      | Yes. Per the Governor’s Executive Order on July 9, 2020, all visitors who are medically able must wear masks while in an indoor public space.   |
| What types of masks are required?   | Homemade masks and/or disposable, basic surgical masks are adequate.  |

| Question  | Answer   |
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| Are face shields acceptable as an alternative to masks?   | No. They may be provided in addition to a face mask as another layer of protection when cleaning or in high frequency contact areas, but may NOT be used in place of a mask.                   |
| What about students with medical concerns or disabilities?  | Parents of students who are not able to wear a mask will be asked to provide a note from a physician.  |
| Will the District supply a mask for any student who does not have one?  | We ask that all students and staff supply their own mask, but the District will provide a mask to any student or staff member who does not have one.   |
| What if a mask becomes unusable during the course of the day?   | The District will have a supply of replacement masks in all buildings.   |
| Is social distancing required in schools and buses?   | No. Social distancing is recommended where possible, but as long as students are using masks, it is not a requirement of Phase 4.  |
| Are there other requirements beyond wearing a mask while being transported on a school bus?   | Yes. Students are required to use hand sanitizer prior to getting on a school bus. The sanitizer is provided by the District. In addition, buses must be cleaned before and after every route. |
| How will restroom facilities be cleaned?  | As with all community spaces in the building, restrooms will be cleaned and disinfected frequently throughout the day. Students are also required to wash their hands thoroughly.              |
| Will school buses be cleaned frequently?  | Yes. School buses will be cleaned before and after every route.  |
| Will any student or staff member who is displaying symptoms of COVID-19 be immediately quarantined from the rest of the staff and student body? | Yes.   |
| Are students who becomes sick during the school day allowed to take the bus home?   | No.  |

| Question  | Answer   |
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| Will a student who is displaying COVID-19 symptoms be able to finish the day at school?               | No. Parents must have a plan to take their student home as soon as possible once symptoms are displayed.   |
| What if the student tests positive for COVID-19?  | The District is required to cooperate with the Lapeer County Health Department to track any positive case in order to collect information about contacts.  |
| How long will any student or staff member who has tested positive for COVID-19 be held out of school? | Any student or staff member who tests positive for the virus will not be allowed to return to school until there is a verified negative test and/or full recovery.   |
| What are staff members required to self-report re: COVID-19 to Human Resources?                       | <p><b>Staff are required to self-report:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If you are experiencing primary symptoms of COVID-19 (fever higher than 100.3 degrees, cough, shortness of breath)</li> <li>• If you have been instructed to quarantine by a healthcare provider</li> <li>• If you are caring for someone who is under a quarantine order</li> <li>• If you have been exposed to someone with the disease (or have reason to believe you have)</li> <li>• If you have been diagnosed or tested positive for the virus</li> </ul> |
| Are family members and other guests allowed in the school building?                                   | Yes, however we ask that visitors be kept to a minimum during this phase. Masks are required.  |
| Are teachers required to maintain six feet of distance between students at all times?                 | No. It is not a requirement, however teachers are encouraged to socially distance as much as possible.   |
| Will MESSA cover COVID-19 testing?  | Yes, but only medically-necessary testing. In addition, MESSA will fully cover medical and mental health telehealth visits with in-network providers through Dec. 31, 2020, at no cost to members and covered dependents.  |
| Are all staff members required to be tested for COVID-19?   | No. Staff members should, however, be tested if it is medically-necessary or the staff member has a reason to believe they have been exposed to the virus.   |

| Question  | Answer  |
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| <p>Will the <i>Michigan Safe Schools</i> protocols be enforced in schools?</p>                      | <p>Yes. It is our responsibility to ensure safety protocols are being followed. There is a small but significant percentage of the workforce in our school district, who are 65 and older. This group is disproportionately vulnerable to this disease and we must take measures to ensure they are safe.</p>   |
| <p>What role will the Lapeer County Health Department play?</p>                                     | <p>The District must cooperate with local public health agencies to implement protocols for screening staff and students. The District will also work directly with the Lapeer County Health Department in the event that a confirmed case of COVID-19 is identified. In addition, the District must collect information regarding close contacts from two days prior to the display of symptoms.</p> |
| <p>What about indoor assemblies?</p>  | <p>The District cannot permit indoor assemblies that bring together students from more than one classroom in any of our buildings.</p>  |
| <p>How will the District provide food service in light of Phase 4 health and safety guidelines?</p> | <p>The District is working closely with its food service provider to develop a plan for food service that is consistent with the best practices outlined in the Roadmap.</p>  |
| <p>What if there is an outbreak of COVID-19 in one or more of our schools?</p>                      | <p>School districts retain the authority to close school buildings even if they have not been mandated to do so.</p>  |
| <p>What other requirements must the District follow?</p>  | <p>All districts in Michigan must have plans in place to deliver instruction based on all the scenarios laid out in the Roadmap. In addition, Districts must publish a COVID-19 Preparedness and Response Plan.</p>   |

| Question   | Answer  |
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| Is my student required to get a temperature check before entering school?  | No, this is not a requirement of the District. We do, however, encourage parents to check temperatures of students before school and to respond accordingly. Parents are encouraged to monitor symptoms of COVID-19 and exclude their children from school if any of the primary symptoms of COVID-19 are present (cough, shortness of breath, temperature over 100.3 degrees). |
| Will there be plastic shields in the office area to ensure the safety of our secretarial staff?  | Yes. In all schools.  |
| What about water fountains?  | Water fountains in the building will not be accessible during this time. Students should plan on bringing their own water to school.  |
| Will staff be required to follow the daily protocol for self-screening using the online (MI Symptoms) screening tool?                          | Yes.  |
| Are students required to be screened before coming to school?  | No. The District is, however, required to cooperate with the local health department with regard to screening protocols that are deemed necessary for students and staff.   |
| Does the District offer virtual learning options for families that choose not to return their students to schools for the 2020-21 school year? | Yes. The District has a robust virtual learning program for students in grades K-12. The District will attempt to accommodate any families that wish to choose this option. If this option is chosen, students must remain with the program for the semester.   |
| What can I do to help ensure the re-opening of our schools is a success?   | Take public health guidance seriously. Wear masks, wash your hands, keep your distance and encourage others to do the same.   |

**Elementary Level**

| Question   | Answer  |
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| Will a parent be able to walk their student to class on the first day of school?       | Yes. In order to keep to a minimum the amount of people in the building, only one parent may accompany each student to class. This is required to ensure we can keep traffic on the first day to a minimum.                   |
| How will student drop-off work?  | Student drop-off will largely operate the same as last school year. Students will be required to wear masks upon entering the building. Any deviation from the norm will be communicated by your child's individual building. |
| What about student pick-up?  | Bus riders will remain in a classroom until the bus arrives and will be called out one bus at a time. Car riders will be spread out in the gym by grade level. Masks will be required.  |
| Will students be allowed to have recess?   | Yes, as long as students abide by the health and safety requirements regarding use of masks.  |
| Will students still have breakfast?  | Students who eat breakfast at school will do so in the classroom.   |
| Will students eat lunch as normal in the cafeteria?                                    | Students are not required to wear masks while eating (obviously), but we will make every effort to keep classes together and to practice social distancing as much as possible.   |
| Will students stay in their room for specials?   | Yes, with the exception of Physical Education and potentially technology.   |
| Will special care be taken to disinfect supplies used for specials?                    | Yes. Staff have been instructed to ensure supplies used for specials are cleaned after use, as they are transported on a cart and used for multiple classrooms.   |
| Will students have a traditional gym class?  | Yes, but classes will be held outdoors as much as possible. Equipment will also be sanitized before and after use.  |
| Will students and parents be able to participate in traditional back to school events? | Yes. Your child's school will communicate dates and times for the back to school events.  |

| Question  | Answer  |
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| <b>Secondary Level</b>  |   |
| How can our largest student populations (middle and high school) practice social distancing?                  | Because masks are required for all students and staff, social distancing is not a requirement. It will, however, be strongly encouraged wherever is it achievable.  |
| Are there special cleaning requirements for classrooms at the secondary level?                                | Yes. Because students move from room to room, we are required to clean desks and frequently-touched surfaces after each class period.   |
| What about multi-use technology spaces and libraries?   | The same guidance as above applies.   |
| How will the District handle lunch?   | Our building leaders are currently working on plans to accommodate students in the safest practical manner during lunch.  |
| How does the Roadmap for Phase 4 impact athletics?  | While some of the guidance for athletics is still being discussed, the District must adhere to numerous requirements related to athletics including all MHSAA guidance, healthy hygiene practices, unnecessary contact, disinfecting of equipment, etc. |
| Do the health and safety guidelines for in-school instruction also apply to afterschool clubs and activities? | Yes.  |
| What about large indoor spectator events that are common at the secondary level?                              | All large indoor spectator events are suspended.  |
| What about outdoor athletic or music events?  | Outdoor events are limited to 100 people and must comply with distancing guidelines and use of masks where applicable.  |
| Do the requirements for hand sanitization and mask wearing also apply to transfer buses?                      | Yes.  |