



Proposed Revised Instruction and Learning Plan

The Merrimack School District has developed this plan as a way to communicate to our community its intentions to provide a high-quality education to the students of Merrimack. Since March of 2020 our schools have been impacted by a global pandemic and as educators and a community we seek to partner and be flexible in the coming months in an effort to meet the needs of all of our students/ children.



“No common template exists to determine whether to educate students remotely, bring them back into the classroom, or create a hybrid model that combines both.”

Emma Dorn, Frédéric Panier, Nina Probst, and Jimmy Sarakatsannis





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Merrimack School District

Proposed Revised Instruction and Learning Plan

Our Goal

The ultimate goal of our School District is to have all students and teachers safely back in our school buildings for teaching and learning. However, since this goal is restricted by the Covid19 pandemic this proposed plan calls for modifications to our current instructional and learning model in order to maintain safety and increase student/teacher contact time.

Priorities

- Providing for the safety and wellbeing of our students and staff.
 - Fostering strong relationships and partnerships with families and the greater Merrimack community.
- Providing in-person learning opportunities where possible:
 - A place for students to learn is in school- being out of school presents significant learning and social connection challenges.
- Maintaining a consistent delivery of instructional model:
 - Having consistency is essential for learning to occur for students – disruptions increase stress in students, families and adults.

NHDHHS Guidelines and Merrimack School Board Policies

- [DHHS Covid19 Guidance for Schools](#)
- [Merrimack School District Travel Policy](#)
- [Merrimack School District Mask Policy](#)

NH Department of Education Guidelines



“The health and safety of students, staff, administrators and teachers is the top priority relative to the physical reopening of schools. The State of New Hampshire knows that local school districts are collaborating with local and state health officials and community partners in moving forward to reopen and we encourage that process to continue. In doing so, [the plan] ensures that protocols will align with the most current scientific knowledge and community expectations. It is also reasonable to expect that the protocols recommended by the State and implemented at the local level may adapt as local conditions related to COVID-19 change.”










Introduction

The Merrimack School District's goal is to meet the academic, physical, mental, and emotional needs of students so meaningful learning can continue. Addressing the safety of students and staff while maintaining and enhancing best practices is the primary objective of this proposed plan. The proposed plan reflects the New Hampshire Grades K-12 Back-to-School Guidance issued by the New Hampshire Department of Education in July 2020, as well as the ever-changing recommendations from the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services (NH-DHHS). This plan takes into consideration not only our students' academic needs, but also students' social emotional needs, in addition to the needs of the Merrimack School District staff. It also provides guidelines for families and staff in the event we need to go back into a fully remote model. The proposed plan will be reflective of circumstances on the ground at any given time and will change as circumstances require.

It is our intent to have as consistent and reliable an instructional and learning model for students, families and educators throughout the remainder of the school year as conditions allow. Sudden, mid-course changes, while perhaps unavoidable, should be limited as they increase stress and disrupt learning.

Guiding Principles of Proposed Plan:

-  To provide safe reentry for students and staff by maintaining a healthy school community that continues to follow the DHHS and state guidelines
-  To provide a consistent learning and instructional model for all learners
-  To maintain a rigorous and flexible learning environment that can accommodate both in school and remote learning by utilizing up to date learning platforms and programs
-  To provide for 4 day a week instruction at the 5-12 grade level with the use of 360 camera technology with further connection to students remotely on Friday
-  To provide an option for K-4 students to attend on-site school 5 days per week (early release on Friday) beginning in mid-February
-  To provide and support preventative measures to promote the safety of all staff and students. These measures will continue to include the mandatory use of masks by students and staff according to district policy, adhering to district travel/quarantine policy and the observance of physical distancing (as much as possible given increased student populations in the K-4 environment) and limiting group sizes
-  To continue to provide in-school supports for our neediest/struggling students to the maximum extent possible



- ✚ To maintain the REAL (Remote Education Academy for Learning) Program
- ✚ To support and encourage, as much as physical distancing limitations allow, a sense of belonging, significance in the classroom and school community, and to foster healthy, caring relationships between and among members of the Merrimack School District community.

The Plan:

K-4

- To return to five day in school instruction, for those electing that option, by March 15, 2021
- Maintain a full-time remote learning option for those wishing to elect it

5-12

- Utilize recently acquired technology tools to support concurrent learning by combining cohorts while maintaining the two day in school, two-day remote model
- Maintain a full-time remote learning option for those wishing to elect it

Consequences of the proposed plan:

- More limited social distancing opportunities for students in grades K-4 in classrooms, buses etc. Reducing social distancing from 6 to 3 feet.
- Possible increased sizes in some live or remote classes based upon choices of students and availability of staff (particularly in grades K-4)
- Possible change of teacher assignment in order to accommodate family requests and to maintain reasonable class sizes to address associated safety risks

Benefits of the proposed plan:

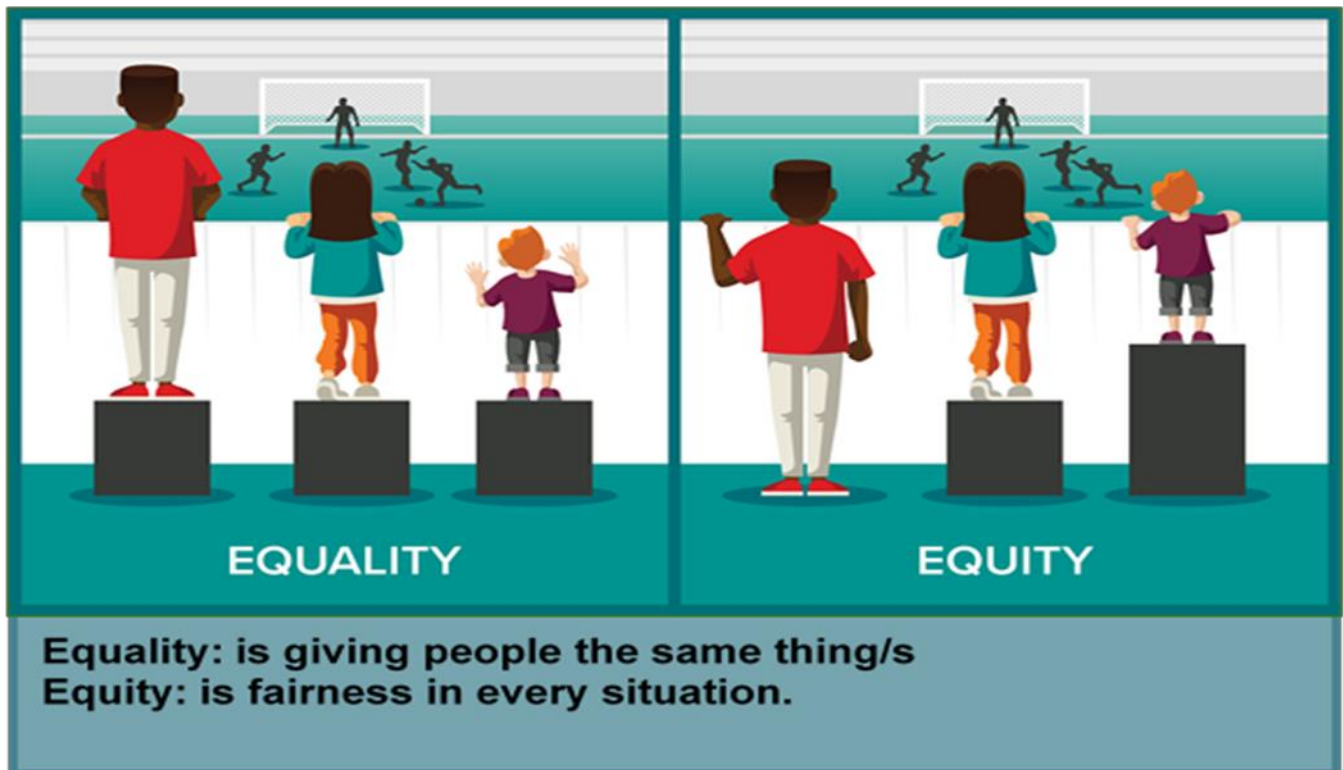
- More instructional and learning time for all students
- Social and Emotional Connection





Considerations in the Planning for Reopening and Concurrent Learning

- ✚ **Safety** Our goal in all of the measures that are being recommended is to reduce risk to our students, families and employees, while ensuring that all students have access to quality learning experiences.
- ✚ **Equity** Our goal in all of the measures that are being recommended is to provide equitable access to technology, meals, and other supports (including special education, accommodations, instruction for English-language learners, and access for students with limited resources).
- ✚ **Wellness** Our goal in all of the measures that are being recommended is to create an environment that is supportive of student and staff mental and physical health and wellness given the traumatic experience of school separation and being isolated for many months.
- ✚ **Teaching and Learning** Our goal in all of the measures that are being recommended is to ensure that every student is on track for success academically, socially, and emotionally by the end of the year. This includes assessing student learning, augmenting instruction when needed, the provisioning of structural supports, and professional resources for teachers and families.





The Plan

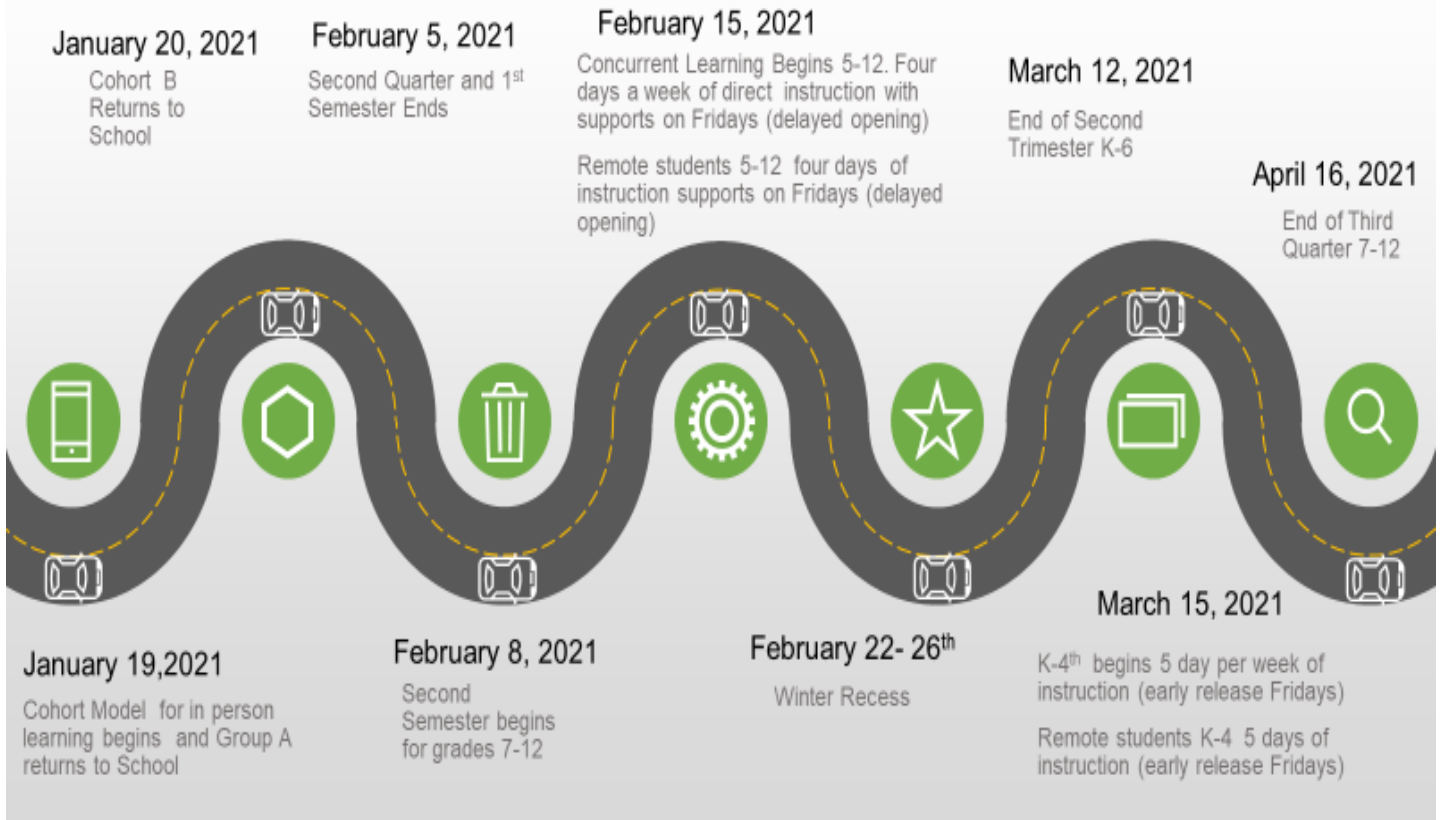
The Plan at Each Level	Impacts
Merrimack Early Education Program (MEEP)	Pre-school Program will remain the same and adjust based on student need.
K-4 Elementary Schools	<p>Return Monday through Friday to in person instruction. Monday- Thursday will be full days of school.</p> <p>REAL Program will move to a 5-day model.</p> <p>Fridays will be an early release day (12:45) for all K-4 students.</p> <p>On Friday afternoons educators will meet in Professional Learning Teams to collaborate, plan and review data that will drive instruction and learning.</p>
5-12 MUES, MMS and MHS	<p>Grades 5-12 continue in the cohort model and, with the use of 360 cameras, have four days of concurrent instruction and individualized supports on Fridays.</p> <p>REAL Program will move to a 4-day instructional program and individual supports on Fridays.</p> <p>On Friday mornings educators will work in Professional Learning Teams/Department meetings to collaborate, plan and review data that drives further instruction and learning.</p>





The Road to the Second Half and Increased Learning Opportunities

Timeline for returning to in person and concurrent learning





Implications for Full Return K-4 Elementary Beginning March 15, 2021

- ❖ Students' classroom teachers may change
- ❖ Mask Policy remains in place and masks must be worn all day and on buses
- ❖ 3ft for social distancing
- ❖ Bus routes may change, and there will be less social distancing on the bus (minimum 2 per seat)
- ❖ Possible increase in the number of close contacts



- ❖ Five days of in school instruction and early release on Fridays
- ❖ Continued custodial cleaning and afternoon sanitizing
- ❖ Continue to offer remote only option and discontinue hybrid option
- ❖ Consistency of daily health checks by families is prioritized
- ❖ Staffing absences remain a challenge

Effects of the Pandemic on Collaboration and Planning

- ▶ Due to staffing patterns, safety protocols, and the inability to gather students in large groups educators have had a significant reduction in collaboration time and the ability to plan for instruction during the workday.
- ▶ During this pandemic, there has been a significant strain on school schedules, including the need for the Unified Arts Teachers (UA) at the Elementary level to provide both remote and in school instruction.
- ▶ Typically, the PLTs occur at the elementary level during the school day. Essential to the operation of PLTs, is the role of, the UA teachers' work with the students to provide enrichment activities while classroom teachers meet in grade level teams which include guidance, administration and special educators.
- ▶ Collaboration time across the district is essential to the implementation of the instructional model including all the work that was completed over the summer to develop Essential Learning Competencies (ELCs) and the adoption of a new standards-based report card at the K-6 level.
- ▶ Maintenance duties require all personnel to vacate the buildings at the close of the school day to sanitize and fog the instructional areas. This is essential in the safety of our staff and students.



More
Information



Further Information Regarding Early Release on Fridays for K-4

- ▶ In Merrimack we hold a high standard for quality education for students. We have not lessened that standard even in the midst of a pandemic that has not been faced before. The PLT time will allow us to continue to meet the level of rigor required to help our students make advancements.
- ▶ Planning and collaboration are very different components and are both imperative to each other
- ▶ Collaboration time (PLT) includes Title I, Guidance, Special Educators and Administrators. This is the foundation of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and for knowing your students as learners.
- ▶ During PLTs, teachers get together weekly to review student data and plan for next levels of instruction. The analysis of student performance data is essential for the purpose of designing differentiated and personalized instruction for every student.
- ▶ Effective planning happens when you know your students' needs and have the ability to design lessons based on essential learning competencies that meet these needs, which leads to quality instruction and parity amongst grade levels and classrooms.

Impact of Reduction in Planning and Collaboration Time 2020-2021

- ▶ Without the addition of a two-hour early release on Friday, teachers will lose at least 40% of their weekly planning/collaboration time (based on the time they are given in a typical year).
- ▶ Implementing a two-hour early release will provide teachers with 92% of their typical weekly planning/collaboration time.



▶Based on national data and safety protocols concerning rates of viral transmission in older students the District will not support a return to full time live instruction for students in grades 5-12.

▶The district has invested COVID related federal dollars, to purchase VDO 360 cameras for every classroom in grades 5-12.

▶The VDO 360 camera is a plug and play camera with an external speaker that is an alternative to your existing webcam or laptop camera. This camera provides more flexibility and can create a link between students learning concurrently at school and at home as one class.

Benefits

- Easy to install and use
- Allows for operator (educator) to aim camera at up to six preset locations of their choosing to allow for more options in what is shared with the remote learner
- Allows schools to maintain limited student populations on any given day while increasing instructional time
- Allows for four/five days of live, concurrent instruction
- Eliminates the need for educators to teach and reteach lessons to different cohorts each week

Challenges

- For educators to learn how to operate the new device, and adapt its use to their current instructional format and style
- For educators to observe home conditions that might create/necessitate mandated reporting
- For educators there will be greater exposure of their practice to individuals at home other than students

Concurrent Learning 5-12

Concurrent Learning design provides a hybrid format for face-to-face and online students and adds a flexible participation for students allowing them to attend face-to-face synchronous class sessions or complete course learning activities online without attending class in person. The educator provides instructional structure, content, and activities to meet the needs of students participating both in class and online. These are not necessarily completely separated sets of activities and are typically not the same activities for both types of student participation but must be equivalent sets of activities so that student learning can be effective in either participation format. No matter which participation format, teaching and learning activities should:

- Be presented effectively (and professionally)
- Engage learners in activities
- Use authentic assessment to evaluate student learning



Scenarios that Affect the Planning for the Proposed Model

<p>COMMUNITY PROBLEM</p> <p>COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP</p> <p>COMMUNITY SOLUTION</p>	<h3>GIVENS</h3> <p>WHAT HAPPENS IN THE COMMUNITY HAPPENS TO THE SCHOOLS</p> <p>COVID-19 HAS INTERRUPTED SCHOOLING DURING A PANDEMIC SCHOOLS MUST SEEK BALANCE BETWEEN THEIR EDUCATIONAL MISSION AND THEIR HEALTH AND SAFETY RESPONSIBILITIES</p> <p>PANDEMIC IMPACTS CAN BE SWIFT AND UNPREDICTABLE</p> <p>WORKING TOGETHER OFFERS THE BEST OPPORTUNITY TO MEET AND BEAT THE PANDEMIC CHALLENGE</p>
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<p>RECOMMENDATION JANUARY 19 THROUGH FEBRUARY 5, 2021</p>	<h3>MAINTAIN CURRENT OPERATIONS GREEN</h3> <p>HYBRID OPTION</p> <p>FULLY REMOTE OPTION</p> <p>ALLOWANCE TO SWITCH OPTION*</p> <p><small>*PROCESS OUTLINED ON EACH SCHOOL'S WEBSITE</small></p>
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PROPOSED FOR THE
MID YEAR

- FULL SCHOOL INSTRUCTION K-4
- MODIFIED HYBRID OPTION 5-12
*Assistance of 360 Camera Technology
- FULL REMOTE OPTION
- ALLOWING FOR SWITCHING OF
OPTIONS
*Process outlined on Each Schools Website

SCENARIO I
RED

**SUDDEN,
UNPLANNED**

MULTIPLE CLOSE
CONTACTS WITHIN
A SCHOOL OR
ACROSS SCHOOLS

- STUDENT OR STAFF MEMBER TESTS POSITIVE
- MULTIPLE CLOSE CONTACTS WITH CONFIRMED POSITIVE INDIVIDUAL WITHIN A SCHOOL
- CONTACT TRACING IS INCONCLUSIVE/INCOMPLETE/REVEALS WIDESPREAD CONTACT WITHIN A SCHOOL
- CONTACTS CANNOT BE ISOLATED AND/OR SEPARATED FROM POPULATION WITHIN A SCHOOL
- IMPACTS ON OTHER SCHOOLS DUE TO BEYOND SCHOOL CONTACTS (SPORTS, SIBLINGS ETC.)
- OTHER



SCENARIO 2

PURPLE

SUDDEN OR ANTICIPATED

STAFF/ADMINISTRATION CAPACITY TO CONDUCT CLASS AND SCHOOL OPERATIONS

- STAFF OR ADMINISTRATOR CHILD/FAMILY ILLNESS OR QUARANTINE DUE TO COVID-19 LOCALLY OR ELSEWHERE—FFCRA, FMLA, ADA
- MORE STUDENTS REQUESTING REMOTE INSTRUCTION THAN CURRENT STAFF DEPLOYMENT CAN ABSORB
- MORE STAFF REQUESTING REMOTE INSTRUCTION ASSIGNMENTS THAN CURRENT IN PERSON INSTRUCTION CAN ALLOW
- HIGH STAFF ABSENTEEISM/LACK OF SUBSTITUTES
- REGULAR FLU/COLD
- OTHER

BIGGEST FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO SCHOOL OR DISTRICT NEED TO TRANSITION TO **RED** OR **PURPLE** PHASE

- TRAVEL OUTSIDE NEW ENGLAND
 - HOLIDAY TRAVEL IN PARTICULAR
- ATTENDANCE AT LARGE GATHERINGS
- COLD AND FLU SEASON
- SELF-DIAGNOSIS
- INACCURATE/INCOMPLETE REPORTING OF TRAVEL, SYMPTOMS (INTENTIONAL OR UNINTENTIONAL)
- NOT FOLLOWING DISTRICT POLICY OR PROCEDURES REGARDING MASKS, SOCIAL DISTANCING, HANDWASHING AND RELATED SAFETY PROTOCOLS



When can I get a **COVID-19 VACCINE** in NH?

Updated: 1/14/2021



PHASE 1

PHASE 1A

- High-risk health workers
- First responders
- Older adults living in residential care settings

PHASE 1B

- People ≥ 65 years old
- Medically vulnerable at *significantly* higher risk with 2 or more conditions
 - Family caregivers of those medically vulnerable persons, ≤16 years old not eligible for vaccine
- Residents and staff of residential facilities for persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities
- Corrections officers and staff working in correctional facilities
- First responders and health workers not already vaccinated

DECEMBER - MARCH*



PHASE 2

PHASE 2A

- K-12 school and childcare staff

PHASE 2B

- People 50 - 64 years old

MARCH - MAY*



PHASE 3

PHASE 3A

- Medically vulnerable <50 years old at *moderately* higher risk with 1 or more conditions

PHASE 3B

- Everyone else not already vaccinated

MAY and BEYOND*

Additional details are coming soon.

Contact 2-1-1 for more information and visit nh.gov/covid19 for updates.



*Estimated time frame depends on vaccine doses allocated to NH from the federal government and vaccine uptake.



NH COVID-19 TESTING LOCATIONS with PRIORITY APPOINTMENTS within 24 Hours for STUDENTS and SCHOOL EMPLOYEES with Symptoms of COVID-19*

HOSPITALS

H1	Alice Peck Day Hospital	Lebanon
H2	Androscoggin Valley Hospital	Berlin
H3	Catholic Medical Center	Manchester
H4	Cheshire Medical Center	Keene
H5	Elliot Hospital	Manchester
H6	Franklin Regional Hospital	Franklin
H7	Huggins Hospital	Wolfeboro
H8	Lakes Region General Hospital	Laconia
H9	Littleton Regional Healthcare	Littleton
H10	Memorial Hospital	North Conway
H11	Southern NH Medical Center	Nashua
H12	Spears Memorial Hospital	Plymouth
H13	St. Joseph Hospital	Nashua
H14	Upper Connecticut Valley Hospital	Colebrook
H15	Weeks Medical Center	Lancaster
H16	Wentworth-Douglass Hospital	Dover

NATIONAL GUARD

National Guard Test Sites

- G1 Concord
- G2 Londonderry



*These testing locations have reported to the Department of Health and Human Services that appointments are available for students and teachers with symptoms of COVID-19 within 24 hours of the request for an appointment. The appointment may include the use of a rapid antigen test such as an Abbott BinaxNOW test or a PCR test sent to a reference lab reporting shorter turnaround times.

Please click highlighted locations for website link

NH COVID-19 Testing Locations With Priority Appointments For Students and School Staff



Classrooms and Buildings

- Masks will be worn at all times
 - Mask breaks will be allowed
 - Lunchtime remove for mask when eating
- Classrooms shall be arranged to maximize physical distance between students
- Assigned seats required
 - Individual chairs/desks should be arranged so that students are spaced at least three feet apart when possible
- Water bubblers shut down
- Students are encouraged to bring a filled water bottle to school
- Hallways marked with social distancing and direction markers
- Meals in the cafeteria, classroom & other areas, social distanced, with students seated with their classroom groups

Maintenance

- The maintenance department will provide schools with all cleaning supplies, as well as hand sanitizer stations in every classroom
 - Additional cleaning frequency & methods
 - cleaning during school, and after school
 - deep cleaning and spraying in the evening
- High touch point cleaning of handrails and door handles (inside and out) throughout the school day

School Operations

- School bus transportation / cleaning
 - Buses will load from back to front
 - Students must wear masks
 - Assigned seating (with siblings if multiple children from the same family)
 - Unload from front to back
 - Windows open when possible
- Food services will be school specific
 - Students may eat in the cafeteria or other assigned areas sitting with classroom social distanced 3-6 feet
 - Classroom delivery provided from cafeteria when needed
- Utilize outside spaces as much as possible for instruction, eating, and breaks
- Restrict all visitors (parents and vendors included) to allow only essential access
- Schools are closed for all non-school functions and after school activities
- No assemblies or large group gatherings



Proposed Instructional and Learning Model

Merrimack educators will continue to use the instructional model throughout the year in the proposed modified hybrid (5-12), remote (K-12) and full-time educational schedule (K-4). Groups of educators will continue to meet and identify Essential Learning Competencies that guide the planning and delivery of instruction. We continue to gather evidence of learning and adapt the instruction to meet the needs of our learners.

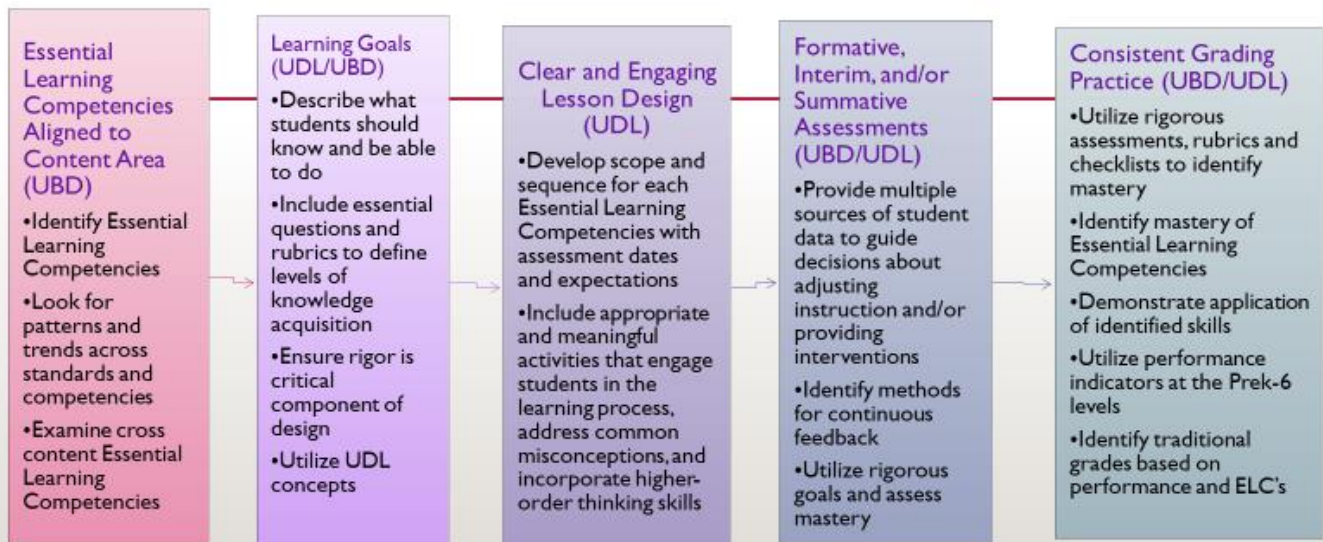
Consistency Clarity Quality

Whether your child attends school in person or remotely, the staff is committed to providing an education that is:

- **Consistent**– there will be a schedule to follow and regular communication about assignments and missing work
- **Reliable and Understandable**- there will be an understanding of expectations, when assignments are due, and how to receive help from the educator(s)
- **Rigorous**-high quality all work will have purpose; it will help to prepare for new skills, provide practice, and/or allow for demonstration of mastery

INSTRUCTIONAL MODEL 2020-2021

Revised 8-10-20





Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)

Research demonstrates many positive outcomes regarding SEL, including positive academic outcomes, improved school climate, reduced negative behavior and emotional stress.

Additional benefits of SEL instruction include increased motivation to learn, a stronger commitment to school, increased time spent on schoolwork, improved classroom behavior, raised academic achievement by as much as eleven percent, decreases in requests for disciplinary action, and ultimately reduced levels of stress, anxiety, and depression.





Student Services



Ensuring the academic, physical, emotional and psychological safety of every student is a priority for all reopening plans. This means considering the heightened risks facing our most vulnerable students and the staff who support them, including but not limited to those with compromised immune systems, impulse control issues, or other behavioral issues or disabilities who cannot follow public health guidelines. The plan for these students will be developed on a case by case basis.

Morning— Students with complex needs will:

- Be met by a staff member at the bus/parent vehicle
- Have a staff member to guide them to the main entrance
- Be guided through the hand washing process by a staff member upon arrival and will have a schedule of hand washing throughout the day
- Be escorted by the staff member directly to their assigned classroom
- Whenever possible, be provided with special education services in the classroom

- ❖ When working in small groups, staff will wear PPE
- ❖ Students and staff will sanitize or wash hands prior to group work as well as after group work
- ❖ No materials will be shared. Each student will have their own set of tools and equipment





2020 - 2021 SCHOOL CALENDAR

Merrimack School District
Merrimack, NH 03054

AUGUST	M	T	W	Th	F						
	24	25	26	27	28						
days	31										
	M	T	W	Th	F						
SEPTEMBER		1	2	3	4	FEBRUARY	M	T	W	Th	F
19 days	LD	8	9 Δ	10 Δ	11 Δ	15 days	1	2	3	4	5
	14 Δ	15 Δ	16 Δ	17 Δ	18 Δ		8	9	10	11	12
	21 Δ	22 Δ	23 Δ	24 Δ	25 Δ		15	16	17	18	19
	28 Δ	29 Δ	30 Δ				X	X	X	X	X
	M	T	W	Th	F		M	T	W	Th	F
OCTOBER				1 Δ	2 Δ	MARCH	1	2	3	4	5
21 days	5 Δ	6 Δ	7 Δ	8 Δ	9 Δ	23 days	8	9	10	11	12
	X Δ	13 Δ	14 Δ	15 Δ	16 Δ		15	16	17	18	19
	19 Δ	20 Δ	21 Δ	22 Δ	23 Δ		22	23	24	25	25
	26 Δ	27 Δ	28 Δ	29 Δ	30 Δ		29	30	31		
	M	T	W	Th	F		M	T	W	Th	F
NOVEMBER	TW	TW	4	5	6 *	APRIL				1	2
15 days	9	10	X	12	13	17 days	5	6	7	8	9
	16	17	18	19	20		12	13	14	15	16*
	23	24	X	X	X		19	20	21	22	23
	30						X	X	X	X	X
	M	T	W	Th	F		M	T	W	Th	F
DECEMBER		1	2	3	4	MAY	3	4	5	6	7
17 days	7	8	9	10	11	20 days	10	11	12	13	14
	14	15	16	17	18		17	18	19	20	21
	21	22	23	X	X		24	25	26	27	28
	X	X	X	X			X				
	M	T	W	Th	F		M	T	W	Th	F
JANUARY					X	JUNE		1	2	3	4
19 days	4	5	6	7	8	14 days	7	8	9	10	11
	11	12	13	14	15		14	15	16	17	18
	X	19	20	21	22		21	22	23	24	25
	25	26	27	28	29		28	29	30		

IMPORTANT DATES

- | | |
|---|--|
| August 31. Teachers' Preparation (TP) | November 11. Veterans' Day |
| September 1 - 4 Teachers' Workshops (P) | November 25 - 27 . . . Thanksgiving Recess |
| September 7 Labor Day (LD) | Dec. 24 - Jan. 1. Holiday Recess |
| September 8. Teachers' Workshops
and State Primary Elections | January 18 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day |
| September 9. First Day of School B/D | February 22 - 26 . . . Winter Recess |
| September 14. First Day of School A/C | February/March Parent Conferences |
| Sept 9 - Oct 30 Hybrid/Remote Learning | April 26 - 30 Spring Recess |
| October 12 Columbus Day | May 31 Memorial Day |
| October/November Parent Conferences | TBD Last Day of School |
| November 2 - 3. Teachers' Workshops
and General Election | TBD Make-up Instruction |
- * = End of Quarter
Δ = Hybrid/Remote Learning



Proposed Important Dates 2021

Date	Event
January 19, 2021	Cohort A returns to in-person learning Remote Cohort C begins
January 20, 2021	Cohort B returns to in-person learning Remote Cohort D begins
January 19 to February 5th	Current Cohort model in place for all learners with two days of direct instruction and two days of extensions Individual supports will be provided on Fridays
February 8, 2021	Second semester begins- 7-12 student begin new schedules
February 15, 2021	<p>Grades 5-12 continue in the cohort model and, with the use of 360 cameras, have four days of concurrent instruction and individualized supports on Fridays.</p> <p>Friday mornings will be used by educators to work in Professional Learning Teams/Department meetings to collaborate, plan and look at data that drives further instruction</p>
February 8, 2021- February 12	Cohort model stays in place K-4
February 8, 2021-end of school year	<p>All REAL program students 5-12 move to four days a week of instruction and individualized supports on Fridays.</p> <p>Friday mornings will be used by educators to work in Professional Learning Teams/Department meetings to collaborate, plan and look at data that drives further instruction</p>



February 22-26	Winter recess
March 12, 2021	End of the second trimester grades K-6
March 15, 2021-end of school year	<p>K-4 will move to five day per a week in-person instruction and learning model with early release on Friday at 12:45</p> <p>Friday afternoons will be used by educators to work in Professional Learning Teams and collaborate, plan and review data that drives further instruction</p>
March 15, 2020-end of school year	<p>All REAL student's K-4 will move to five day per a week instruction and learning model with early release on Friday at 12:45</p> <p>Friday afternoons will be used by educators to work in Professional Learning Teams and collaborate, plan and review data that drives further instruction</p>
April 16, 2021	End of the third quarter 7-12
April 26-30	Spring recess
Last day of school 2020-2021	TBD



Current Research

How to support schools to stay safe

Multi-layered approach to help prevent introduction & spread of SARS-CoV-2 in schools

Communications with parents, students, teachers & staff

- ✓ Intense collaboration between the school and the community is key
- ✓ Post signs in visible locations that promote everyday protective measures
- ✓ Ask for cooperation of parents to report any cases of COVID-19 in the household
- ✓ Ensure frequent communications and messaging to reassure parents, students and teachers
- ✓ Address and counter rumours, misleading information and stigma
- ✓ If someone in the household is suspected of having COVID-19, all members of the household should stay home and the school should be informed

Community

- Early detection and isolation of cases; contact tracing and quarantine
- Swift public health response to halt spread: Cluster investigation and local public health and social measures
- Physical distancing, hand-washing and age-appropriate wearing of masks
- Safe public transportation, protection of vulnerable groups and other measures as appropriate

School & classrooms

- All community measures, plus:
- Symptom screening by parents and teachers
- Maintaining a clean and healthy environment
- Ensuring adequate and appropriate ventilation

Individuals at high risk

- Enhanced protection of students and teachers with underlying health conditions
- Coordinated approach to address vulnerable children's needs (mental health and psychosocial support, rehabilitation, nutrition, etc.)



EVIDENCE BASED



Research on Educational Needs by Level

Different grades have different needs for in-person learning.

Considerations for returning to classrooms, by student segment¹

Based on current evidence

● Return in person ○ Inconclusive ● Stay remote

	Early elementary (ages 4–8)	Late elementary (ages 8–12)	Secondary (ages 12–18)	Secondary graduating class (ages 17–18)
Criticality of remoteness for public safety²	Possible lower risk of transmission; hardest to enforce physical distancing and masks	Possible lower risk of transmission; harder to enforce physical distancing and masks	More risk of transmission; easier to enforce physical distancing and masks	More risk of transmission; easiest to enforce physical distancing and masks
Criticality of school reopening for economic activity	Highest need for childcare	High need for childcare	Low need for childcare	Lowest need for childcare
Risk of losing learning during school closure	Critical phase for initial literacy and cognitive development	Medium risk of disruption of academic progression	Medium risk of disruption of academic progression; higher risk of dropouts	Risk of disruption to academic progression to university; higher risk of dropouts
Effectiveness of remote learning	Lowest effectiveness: young children need social learning and supervision	Low effectiveness: ongoing need for social learning and supervision	Medium to high effectiveness, depending on student profile	Higher effectiveness with growing student autonomy
Logistics of scheduling safely in person	Easy to maintain stable cohorts		Hard to create cohorts (as a result of different combinations of subjects and tracks)	

¹All protocols are contingent on viral transmission being under control.

²"The path to zero and schools: Achieving pandemic resistant teaching and learning spaces." Harvard Global Health Institute.



What we know about children and COVID-19

- **COVID-19 is reported much less frequently in children than in adults**
 - Children and adolescents represent about 8% of reported cases (and 29% of the global population)
 - Mild and asymptomatic infections are more common and may be under-reported
- **Children have much milder disease than adults¹**
 - All the same, children with underlying conditions are at higher risk of serious illness
 - Rarely, a few may develop severe disease like multisystem inflammatory syndrome² (MIS-C)
 - MIS-C is a rare inflammatory condition with persistent fever
 - Occurs 2-4 weeks after onset of COVID-19; most recover with treatment but rarely death may occur
- **The role of children in transmission is not yet fully understood**
 - Children of all ages can be infected and spread the virus to others
 - Studies to date show less spread among children under ten years than in older children
 - Infection occurs more often in teenagers than in younger children
 - Older children appear to be more susceptible to infection and to transmit more often than younger children

¹ [Systematic review of COVID-19 in children shows milder cases and a better prognosis than adults](#)

² [Multisystem inflammatory syndrome in children and adolescents with COVID-19](#)



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Young children are less susceptible to SARS-CoV-2 than older children¹

Susceptibility refers to how easily a child can become infected by SARS-CoV-2 ► [SEE THE DATA](#)

Data is still limited. Current information from most studies suggests that SARS-CoV-2 susceptibility rises with age. A range of studies show this in different ways:^{1,2}

- **Contact tracing studies:**
 - Given the same exposure to infected household members, children under the age of 10 become infected less frequently than adults and adolescents. Studies limited as often rely on persons with symptoms.
- **Studies of household and community transmission:**
 - Children 9 years or younger are less susceptible than children aged 10-14 years
- **Serological studies:**
 - Seroprevalence (% of study participants with COVID-19 antibodies) is lower in younger children than in older children and adults. However the assay used had not been validated in children. ► [SEE THE DATA](#)
- **Modelling studies:**
 - Susceptibility to infection of persons under 20 years is about half that of adults aged 20 or older and rises steadily with age. Modelling studies rely on data from other studies so will also share the same limitations.

¹ [On the effect of age on the transmission of SARS-CoV-2 in households, schools and the community](#)

² [Susceptibility to and transmission of COVID-19 amongst children and adolescents compared with adults: a systematic review and meta-analysis](#)



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Remote Educational Academy for Learning (REAL)

K – 4 Elementary Schools	Mastricola Upper Elementary School	Merrimack Middle School	Merrimack High School
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receive direct instruction virtually from a classroom teacher five days a week (Early release on Fridays) • Will spend part of the day accessing their learning in Zoom sessions and other times working independently • Participate in small group instruction with school staff in break out rooms. • Utilize the Canvas platform to participate in classroom instruction, complete assignments, and organize work • Follow all school and district behavioral expectations • Access supports such as school counselors and behavioral specialists as needed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receive direct instruction virtually from a classroom teacher five days a week (delayed opening on Friday) • Spend part of the day accessing their learning in Zoom sessions and other parts working independently • Participate in small group instruction with school staff in break out rooms. • Utilize the Canvas platform to participate in classroom instruction, complete assignments, and organize work • Follow all school and district behavioral expectations • Access supports such as school counselors and behavioral specialists as needed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receive instruction virtually from teacher five days a week (delayed opening on Fridays) • Utilize the Canvas platform to participate in classroom instruction, complete assignments, and organize work • Access small group, whole group, and one-on-one instruction from team teachers on Fridays • Spend part of the day accessing their learning in Zoom sessions and other parts working independently • Participate in small group instruction with school staff in break out rooms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receive instruction virtually from teachers five days a week (delayed opening on Fridays) • Spend part of the day accessing their learning in Zoom sessions and other parts working independently • Utilize the Canvas platform to participate in classroom instruction, complete assignments, and organize work • Follow all school and district behavioral expectations • Access supports such as school counselors and behavioral specialists as needed





Thorntons Ferry School: K- 4 Next Steps- February 15, 2021

Pivoting from Hybrid/Remote Model to Full in School/Full Remote Model

Please complete one survey for each of your children and complete no later than Monday January 18, 2021

The Merrimack School District is considering an option to allow students in Kindergarten through Grade Four to choose to return to full time in school learning according to the following schedule:

Monday-Thursday-Full Day in school instruction
Friday-Follows an early release schedule (dismissal at 12:45)

The early release on Friday will allow educators to meet in Professional Learning Teams to collaborate and plan for upcoming instruction. This Friday planning time is necessary due to the fact that we will be running an in person and remote educational model. Running this dual system significantly impacts typical school functions that we rely on to achieve good results for students, like collaborative planning time for teachers. As a result, we cannot accommodate this planning time as usual, and require this time on Fridays.

As you consider your response please consider some of the possible implications of the transition to this model:

Social Distancing would now be 3 feet or less
Increased possibility of the need to quarantine due to exposure
Possible change in teacher assignments and student placement
Possible change in bus routes as well as a possible increase in the number of students on the bus

Current policies related to the pandemic will remain in effect, such as

Travel
Masks
Communicable Disease

*Please note the ability to complete this shift is dependent on the results of the survey and staffing.

Students in grades K-4 will remain in the current hybrid/remote model from January 19-February 12.





Remote and Hybrid Online Guidelines for REAL Program and 5-12 Learners

Etiquette tips for Videoconferencing for Students:

Excerpt from District Policy JICL: [Student Use of Information Technology](#):

The Merrimack School District recognizes that information technology is a tool that, when responsibly applied, enhances the classroom experience and extends learning beyond the school walls. With information technology saturating nearly every aspect of our lives, it is incumbent upon the District to provide the members of the school community with an understanding of what the District considers to be appropriate use of information technology by students.

Etiquette for ZOOM or other Videoconferencing Sessions

Teachers will start Zoom sessions with reminders about how the session will run and how to best participate. These videoconferencing sessions are an opportunity to connect with your teachers and fellow students.

1. Be mindful of your location
 - a. Know what is in your background or, better, **use the Desktop Application settings to set a Virtual Background.**
2. Minimize distractions
 - a. Notify others in your home you will be on a Zoom meeting
 - b. Stay focused on your Zoom meeting/chat
3. Use the mute feature
 - a. Your teacher will probably start the meeting with all participants on mute. To talk, you can Unmute yourself. Using mute will minimize distractions from your house such as rambunctious siblings or barking dogs.
4. Think about your actions on camera
 - a. Everyone can see you!
 - b. Be as courteous as possible to ensure a focused learning environment for all.
5. Teachers will start Zoom lessons with reminders about how the session will run and how to best participate.

Conduct Expectations

As with all technology, your use is dependent upon your responsible use. Please remember these important considerations from the [Student Technology Policy](#):

Conduct all school-related communication in a respectful, appropriate and responsible manner at all times. This extends to all communication, whether electronic or in print, and all representation of the school, regardless of venue or occasion.

Protect privacy of fellow students in all communications.

The use of Information Technology in the District is a right that comes with responsibility. Inappropriate use may result in the curtailment of that right. District administrators or their designees shall make all decisions regarding whether or not a user has violated these guidelines and may deny, revoke, or suspend access at any time.



Further Information

For further information please visit our school website at: <https://www.sau26.org/>

You can also follow on Facebook at: @merrimackschools · Education