

Return to School Roadmap: Frequently Asked Questions

Updated: August 7, 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
General Questions	
Is the District permitted to return students to in-person instruction in the 2020-21 school year with traditional class sizes?	Yes, with strict guidelines for health and safety in place.
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 August 6, 2020?	Phase 4

Question	Answer
<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>Which phases allow in-person instruction?</p>	<p>All school districts in phases 4-6 are permitted to offer in-person 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>The year-round calendar has been suspended for the 2020-21 school year.</p>
<p>Did the District consider a hybrid option for Phase 4?</p>	<p>Click here for a response from Superintendent Wandrie.</p>

Question	Answer
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>
Why are E5-5 students exempt from wearing a mask in the classroom when the Governor's Executive Order on masks requires everyone five and older to wear masks in indoor public spaces?	According to the MDE, for the purposes of the executive order, classrooms are not considered indoor public spaces. (Per MDE statement from Office of Public and Governmental Affairs Lapeer County Health Department Toolkit, page 3).
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 our schools.

Question	Answer
What types of masks are required?	Homemade masks and/or disposable, basic surgical masks are adequate.
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.
Will face shields be provided to staff, if needed?	Yes.
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 it safe for children to wear masks outside when it is hot?	Wearing a mask outdoors when it is hot and humid can be uncomfortable, but it is vital for students and staff to wear them in this environment if social distancing cannot be achieved. (Lapeer County Health Department Toolkit, page 3)
What are the District's contingency plans in the event that students refuse to wear masks?	Students who refuse to wear masks will be disciplined in accordance with our student code of conduct and may be placed in a virtual learning setting at the District's discretion.
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?	Click here to hear Transportation Director Linda Thompson speak on requirements that impact busing.

Question	Answer
Will students be required to have temperature checks upon entry of any school buildings or will that be left up to the parents discretion?	No. This is not a requirement, but parents are encouraged to check their children’s temperature and monitor any potential symptoms prior to sending them to school.
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 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.
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 is the protocol when someone tests positive? Will there be contact tracing? Quarantine?	<u>Click here</u> for more information from Kim Seifferly, Executive Director of Human Resources.
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>Staff are required to self-report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you are experiencing primary symptoms of COVID-19 (fever higher than 100.4 degrees, cough, shortness of breath) • If you have been instructed to quarantine by a healthcare provider • If you are caring for someone who is under a quarantine order • If you have been exposed to someone with the disease (or have reason to believe you have) • If you have been diagnosed or tested positive for the virus

Question	Answer
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.
Will the <i>Michigan Safe Schools</i> protocols be enforced in schools?	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.
What role will the Lapeer County Health Department play?	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.
What about indoor assemblies?	The District cannot permit indoor assemblies that bring together students from more than one classroom in any of our buildings.

Question	Answer
How will the District provide food service in light of Phase 4 health and safety guidelines?	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.
What if there is an outbreak of COVID-19 in one or more of our schools?	School districts retain the authority to close school buildings even if they have not been mandated to do so.
What other requirements must the District follow?	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. Our plan was approved at the August 5, 2020 Regular Meeting of the LCS Board of Education. It is located on the main page of the District website at LapeerSchools.org .
Will there be plastic shields in the office area to ensure the safety of our secretarial staff?	Yes. In all schools.
Are we opening with just the bare minimum, i.e., the requirements for phase 4? Are we following any of the highly recommended guidelines for phase 4?	We must comply will all of the Roadmap requirements of Phase 4. Additionally, the District is making a good faith effort to follow many recommendations as well (example: employee screening). (Per COVID-19 Preparedness and Response Workplace Plan - recommendation compliance by phase).
In the event that students show aggression to anyone (especially staff) in regards to deliberately coughing, sneezing, spitting, etc what will consequences be?	School discipline will be handed down in accordance with our student handbook on a case-by-case basis. This type of behavior will not be tolerated.
Under Phase 4 guidelines, would open houses and parents coming to class on the first day of school still be allowed?	Yes, as long as all visitors adhere to the guidelines.

Question	Answer
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.
Can students who elect to go 100 percent virtual in Phase 4 through Lapeer Virtual still participate in clubs and extracurriculars?	Yes, as well as those students in in Lapeer Virtual Partnership (formerly LHP) who meet MHSAA requirements for participation.
What is the deadline for Virtual Learning?	Virtual Learning Application Deadline: We are encouraging families to complete the application as soon as possible, but no later than August 31 to ensure proper course selection, schedule changes, and materials are available and complete.
Can a student who has enrolled in full-time Lapeer Virtual transition to in-person instruction?	Students who wish to transition from K-12 Lapeer Virtual to Face to Face instruction will be allowed at the the semester.
Will classes sizes be smaller because of more students choosing online options in the fall?	It is possible that class sizes would be smaller under Phase 4 if a substantial number of traditional students choose full-time virtual.

Question	Answer
<p>In the event the school year starts in Phase 3 (100 percent virtual) will the entire school year be virtual or will in-person learning take place once we are in Phase 4?</p>	<p>The District would return to in-person instruction as soon as it is allowable under the Roadmap.</p>
<p>Will the District notify parents if a student(s) test positive for COVID-19?</p>	<p>Yes, the District would, in cooperation with the Lapeer County Health Department, alert parents to a finding of a positive case of COVID-19 within the staff or student body during the school year. (Per Roadmap, page 25)</p>
<p>How will attendance be taken if the region is in Phase 3 (full-time virtual)?</p>	<p>As a full time virtual student, we are not required to take attendance. However, as a district we feel it is important data to collect for parent communication reasons as well as how we monitor student engagement. We will use Zoom to indicate attendance and Google Classroom assignment to monitor students submitting work. Teachers are required to have two way communication with students weekly and certain weeks will be collected for audit purposes.</p>
<p>Under Phase 3, would teachers be required to give district assessments?</p>	<p>Yes, we are working on ways to make traditional district assessments virtual.</p>
<p>Will teachers need to set up their classrooms in a specific way under Phase 4 guidelines?</p>	<p>We will take steps that are reasonable and possible to Maximize the spacing of desks or tables in the classroom to include desks facing the same direction toward the front of the classroom as Mark mentioned. Teachers should plan to move bookshelves for example, consider teaching workshop at the desks vs carpeted areas, and use as much floor space for seating arrangements.</p>

Question	Answer
<p>Would it be possible for teachers to pre-record lessons in order to accommodate parents who can't be with students during the day? What about paper copies of coursework for students who do not have adequate Internet access?</p>	<p>Yes, if in phase 1-3, there will be some prerecorded lessons either directly by the teachers or from other online sources. Lesson videos are things that will be sent to students each week in Google Classroom. Teachers have had training on how to do this over the summer. All assignments will need to be accessed by Google Classroom but some hardcopy materials will be provided depending on the class. And Hotspots will be available throughout the community to access internet in addition to available paper copies.</p>
<p>Will childcare and preschool be available?</p>	<p>In Phase 4, the District will continue to offer in-person instruction for preschool and will also be able to provide childcare for before and after school school as well as childcare at Kids and Company. If we transition to Phase 3, our preschool programs will transition to remote instruction for preschoolers as required by the Roadmap. Childcare will be allowed under Phase 3 and the District will offer childcare in the event we are in Phase 3. For additional information on Kid's and Company Programs, please contact Stefanie Heddy at sheddy@lapeerschools.org.</p>

Question	Answer
<p>What will Special Education and Student Services look like?</p>	<p>We will continue to make every effort to provide special education and related services to each student as outlined in the individualized education plan (IEP). This includes students with Individual Family Service Plans (IFSP) and Section 504 Plans.</p> <p>During the next few weeks, your child's case manager will be contacting you to arrange for a meeting (IEP, IFSP, or 504) to review and update for this school year.</p> <p>In Phase 4, all programs and services will be provided in-person. If we transition to Phase 3, all programs and services will be provided remotely as required by the Roadmap. Contingency Plans will be discussed and put into place for Phase 3. For additional information on your child's services, please contact Jennifer Tindall at jtindall@lapeerschools.org.</p>
<p>What can I do to help ensure the re-opening of our schools is a success?</p>	<p>Take public health guidance seriously. Wear masks, wash your hands, keep your distance, monitor symptoms and encourage others to do the same.</p>
Elementary Level	
<p>Will a parent be able to walk their student to class on the first day of school?</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>How will student drop-off work?</p>	<p>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.</p>

Question	Answer
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.
Will teachers need to set up their classrooms in a specific way under Phase 4 guidelines?	<p>We will take steps that are reasonable and possible to maximize the spacing of desks or tables in the classroom to include desks facing the same direction toward the front of the classroom.</p> <p>Teachers should plan to move bookshelves for example, consider teaching workshop at the desks instead carpeted areas, and use as much floor space for seating arrangements.</p>

Question	Answer
Secondary Level	
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.

Question	Answer
<p>How would hall passing time be handled at the secondary level under Phase 4 guidelines</p>	<p>Masks need to be worn at all times in the hallways. We will be taking steps to limit students congregating as much as possible – to include limiting the number of times students go to their locker for books.</p>
<p>Do the Phase 4 guidelines allow for band? What about choir?</p>	<p>Yes, Our secondary buildings each have a plan in place for band. We are looking to run band outdoors as much as possible Space kids apart and social distance outside or inside. Choir students must wear masks</p>
<p>What would become of ED-Tech classes in Phase 3?</p>	<p>The programs at Ed Tech will be ready to switch to virtual learning with a quick turnaround. Students will be expected to attend virtual classes (attendance will be taken) and instructors will teach and assign work via online classrooms. Assignments could come in the form of projects, presentations, videos, portfolios, or online work. Each teacher will host 2 hour long class periods during the week. They will also be available for office hours at times not assigned for class periods</p>