



## REOPENING OF SCHOOLS FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

August 24, 2020

### 1. I have a lot of questions about the start of this school year. Who do I contact?

Your child's principal will be happy to help. All principals served on the Reopening Schools Task Force and can answer as many questions as possible. If your principal cannot answer a question, they'll work with others to find the answer and get back to you.

### 2. When will I find out my students' teachers or schedule?

Class schedules and teacher assignments will be shared later than usual this year. Because we are offering both blended and virtual programming, principals, counselors, and registrars needed to start over with student scheduling. We anticipate schedules and teacher assignments will be shared shortly before the first day of school.

### 3. Do I need to supply a mask for my student?

No. All students will be provided two masks to use while at school. Families may choose to purchase or use their own masks if they fit within the guidelines below:

Approved Face Covering	Does NOT Include
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cloth face mask</li><li>• Disposable or paper mask</li><li>• Religious face covering</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Face shield</li><li>• Bandana</li><li>• Neck gaiter</li><li>• Mesh mask</li><li>• Mask with holes or opening</li><li>• Mask with vents</li></ul>

### 4. I believe my child qualifies for an exemption to wearing a face mask. What do I need to do?

There are limited exceptions to the mask requirement that may be made for some students. Families who believe their child may qualify for one of the exemptions should contact the school principal.

### 5. What requirements are in place for students that take a cab/taxi to school in the morning or home from school in the afternoon?

Students who take cab or taxi to and from school should wear a face covering while in the cab. Additionally, if your child is utilizing a cab or taxi provided by the District, the District will document the name of the driver if needed for contact tracing.

### 6. I've changed my mind and no longer want my child in 100% virtual programming. How do I enroll them in the face to face option?

[Please complete this short form](#) if you would like to make a change in the Instructional Model for your child. This includes a request to move from Virtual to Blended or from Blended to Virtual. To complete this form, you will need your student's ID. These requests will be reviewed at the end of each month and



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a determination will be made for the following month. If changes cannot be honored, the District will keep the request for the next month.

### 7. What will breakfast and lunch look like for students?

All students will have access to lunch by cohort. Students at elementary levels will be eating lunch in the classroom. Middle and high school students will be eating lunch in designated areas such as cafeterias and gyms with desks positioned 6 feet apart. These desks will be cleaned and sanitized in between cohorts by custodial staff. Cohorts will enter the food service area to pick up their food. All food will be packaged and only enough food for the cohort will be set out. In between cohorts the service area will be sanitized, and more food will be placed out. Students will not enter PIN numbers. At elementary, students will say their name at the POS to be rung in. Middle and high school students will be given cards with bar codes on their first day. Secondary schools will be equipped with special scanners that can read the bar codes. Lunch staff at registers will be behind plexiglass. At secondary buildings, the plexiglass will have cut outs for cash to be handed through. No change will be given as it cannot be sanitized. A la carte will not be available right away but should be within a few weeks.

Vending machines at secondary levels will not be stocked.

Breakfast will be served at the beginning of school. Students will enter through a designated entry door and proceed to the cafeteria. Breakfast are in grab and go bags and the checkout procedure will be the same as lunch. Once they receive their breakfast students will go to the classroom to eat.

To-go meals will be available every day from 8:30-9:30 at the secondary buildings only. Meals will be available for any student enrolled at a school that serves food but learning virtually for that day. Any student, parent, or guardian can pick up a breakfast and/or a lunch at this time. Each secondary school will have one designated pick up location. These are currently under review from building principals and details should be available soon.

### 8. What is the first day of school for each cohort?

Elementary School:

Aug 31—Device pick up for 100% Virtual students at school

Sept 1—Device pick up for Blended Cohort A students at school

Sept 2—Family Connection Day—Virtual connections with all families and teachers

Sept 3—First day of school for Blended Cohort B students and 100% Virtual Cohort C students

-Devices distributed at school for Blended Cohort B students

Sept 8—First day of school for Blended Cohort A students

Middle and High School:

Aug 31 – Device pick up for 100% Virtual students at school

Sept 1 – First day of school for Blended Cohort A students and 100% Virtual Cohort C students

Sept 3 – First day of school for Blended Cohort B students





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**August 17, 2020**

### **9. When will my child receive a device (iPad or laptop) to use during the school year?**

Students who are enrolled in the 100% virtual option will pick up a device on August 31 at the student's home school. Students who are enrolled in the blended option (face to face 2 days per week and virtual 3 days per week) will vary by level. All elementary students in the blended program will receive their devices on September 1 while secondary students will receive their devices on the first day of face to face learning.

### **10. Have school supply lists changed? Where can we find them?**

Updated school supply lists can be found on the District website at:  
<https://www.ecasd.us/District/About/2020-2021-Back-to-School>

### **11. How will fall sports take place in the spring?**

The WIAA created a one-year alternative season in the spring of 2021 for fall sports. The [revised WIAA calendar](#) shifts seasons for winter and spring sports to allow students to participate in sports in all three seasons with minimal conflict. Each sport has a specific start date outlined within the calendar.

### **12. If Eau Claire moves fall sports to spring, will we have any opponents to play games?**

Yes. Several districts throughout the state have shifted their fall sports to the spring. We are confident that we will be able to schedule games or matches for all sports. Our activities directors will begin to contact other high schools who have adopted the WIAA alternate spring schedule to ensure competition when a decision is made.

### **13. Is it possible to conduct certain sports in a manner where physical distancing is possible?**

While it may be possible to do so for some sports, our instructional model impacts our decision in terms of practicing and competing as a team. We place our students at a competitive disadvantage due to the educational model – the AA/BB schedule. We will not be mixing cohorts of students. The possibility of one day of practice, one game each week during a 6 week season – giving our students fewer opportunities with the lower-risk sports is not equitable for our athletes in competition with other Big Rivers schools or smaller schools under different county guidelines and orders. Furthermore, while other smaller districts in the county may choose to offer the low-risk sports during the fall, we have far more students participating in so many of our activities. Other larger school districts like La Crosse, Green Bay, Appleton, and Madison-area schools will likely be able to participate and compete with us in the new WIAA Alternate Spring model. We want to give our student-athletes the best experience possible.

### **14. Will students in Early Learning (3 & 4 year-olds, Head Start, 4K) need to wear masks all day?**

The concept of physical distancing is difficult for children of this age. The next line of protection is wearing masks if physical distancing cannot be maintained. Students in 4K will be wearing masks per



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the ECASD School Board decision. Our staff will be teaching the mask wearing expectation through modeling, social stories, and practice. We will also build in mask “breaks” and increase mask wearing stamina over time.

### **15. Is it medically safe to wear a mask?**

In most instances, yes. There are some unique cases where the mask will interfere with some individuals, but that is rare.

### **16. What data are used to determine if schools will close?**

At this time, the ECCC Health Department does not have a formula to determine when schools will close. It will be determined on a case by case basis.

### **17. Is it safe for students to play with one another at recess?**

We know that outdoor play is healthy for students. To create a healthy outdoor option for students, we will create as much space as possible when for students outside. This includes having only one class at a time outside for recess, engaging in games or activities that naturally create six feet of space such as hula hoops and four square, and creating space within the environment such as removing every other swing. Additionally, playground equipment will be cleaned daily.

### **18. Is the District requesting/suggesting/requiring teachers and other staff to be tested for COVID?**

The ECCCH had answered this in their 8/13 meeting with all county teachers/staff. No. Current guidance is to test symptomatic people and asymptomatic contacts of a positive case. If this recommendation changes in the future, we will adjust this recommendation. Any test result is a point in time result. It tells a person that they are positive or negative at that point in time but does not indicate if they are positive after that time or were positive prior to that time.

### **19. What is the District's message regarding testing for students?**

Same as above for teachers and staff.

### **20. What level of coordination is underway between ECASD and health care providers, given the relatively large and regional footprint of students, their families and staff?**

Local health care systems are aware of schools returning to in-person learning and continue to collaborate with the Health Department regarding testing capacity. Providers like Security Health have offered Webex meetings for employees and our parents in the past and in the upcoming days, and our Executive Director of Business Services, Abby Johnson, will coordinate future meetings through our insurance contacts. It is extremely important to have a relationship between ECASD and the local healthcare systems to have clear communication channels during a COVID outbreak in a school. The Health Department will be integrally involved with the school district in any outbreak situation and will also be communicating with the health care systems about such.





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### 21. If "third-party" leagues and teams spring up (as they have all summer), what will be the facility policy if they seek to use district gyms?

While we are still seeking the ability to use our gyms for alternative activities for our own students' mental and physical health – when guidance is given from the WIAA for contact days or for our speed and strength programming, they will be done so under the directives of the county orders. We would expect all other groups – those third-party leagues or teams - to submit plans for facility use in concert with the Eau Claire County Health Department orders and directions. We are still finalizing those plans – we may alter our availability to community use for an indefinite period to give us time to develop a system to collect the outside groups' plans.

### 22. Please highlight the coordination going on between the District and childcare providers.

We have several childcare providers who are coordinating with us. However, The Chamber of Commerce is really taking the lead in childcare. Please see the information available on our website ([www.ecasd.us/COVID-19](http://www.ecasd.us/COVID-19)) under "Child Care Partnership Information."

### 23. What technological support would parents/delegates need during this transition? How would we know?

There are two main concerns when we hear about virtual education from families – first, we must build relationships with students, and second, we need to teach children how to learn virtually. We know in the first few weeks there will be equal emphasis on content and digital tools to access. We will also have virtual check ins during the week, and we will be asking is, "How is it going at home with access or the use of Canvas?" Our IT department offers a technology helpdesk, which was previously solely for staff members. However, last spring, as families experienced problems, they could call in for assistance. We will expand our IT services to families again, as we know that was successful. Families can call 715-852-3411 for technology assistance.

### 24. What methods will be implemented to collect technology or educational information? And how will you respond in a culturally responsive manner so parents and others can support their children at home?

We will collect that information differently. We acknowledge that this was an area of concern and are changing our practices. The role of each school's BEA (Bilingual Educational Assistant) must change. We will not just support students in their learning but must assist students' families in these types of situations. These educational assistants will call, rather than prior practices of sending items home in writing.

**August 11, 2020**

### 1. When will we learn which days our students will attend face to face?

Families will receive information about cohort assignments (Day A or Day B) the week of August 17.



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### **2. What will the blended model look like? Will students need to watch class from home?**

Students in cohort A will receive in-person instruction on Mondays and Tuesdays. Students in cohort B will receive the SAME instruction on Thursdays and Fridays. Teachers will plan for 5 days of learning over a week and will plan for activities that are best done in person for when students come to school. The other 3 days are remote instruction at a time that works best for the student with periodic virtual check-ins with their teacher.

### **3. The science and data around COVID-19 changes as we learn more about the disease. Will we adjust our practices as new information comes out?**

All school districts are directed to adhere to guidelines within the orders of their county health departments, and our partnership with the ECCC Health Department has been critical to the development of our plan. As the ECCC Health Department updates Respond Together Eau Claire, we will monitor and could adjust our plans. However, it is important that we balance any adjustments with consistency and predictability for families.

### **4. Please provide an update on how English learner and special education services will be conducted for families who choose the Virtual Only option.**

EL and Special Education Staff will work closely with families to determine programming needs. The District will follow the requirements within the IEP and will adjust when necessary for the student's needs.

### **5. What are the MERV ratings on the filters in each of the schools?**

Currently the Eau Claire School District is using 2 inch and 4 inch pleated or bag type filters with MERV ratings ranging from 8 to 13 depending on the age and design specifications of equipment currently in place in our buildings. We rely on our filter vendor and engineers when determining the best filter options for the equipment we operate in our buildings to provide maximum efficiency. Utilizing filters that exceed equipment specifications may result in decrease air flow due to more resistance in the system resulting in decreased ventilation being supplied to spaces throughout the building and creating a potential for indoor air quality issues to develop. By making sure that we are within design specifications helps us to supply the best ventilation possible for our occupants.

### **6. Where can I find information about school-age childcare available during the virtual-only days?**

We are sharing information about childcare on our website at [ecasd.us/COVID-19](https://ecasd.us/COVID-19). Look for the "Childcare Information" section on the page, with resources linked below. Information will be added as it becomes available.

### **7. Where can I view the results of the Family Survey regarding the Reopening of Schools that was conducted in June 2020?**

The results of the survey can be found [HERE](#).





## REOPENING OF SCHOOLS FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

August 5, 2020

### 1. What are the exact protocols that are followed with the City and County Health Department when there is a positive case with a staff member or student at school?

The Eau Claire City-County Health Department and the ECASD have a long history of partnerships for preventing and following up on communicable disease. We're educational professionals, and our partners are public health professionals. Each of us will be doing what it is that we do best.

Here could be an example of a situation:

- Health Department becomes aware of a positive case.
- HD interviews the person to ask about who they may have been in contact with, including family, coworkers, or others.
- If there are additional contacts (within 6 ft, 15 min) at the school, HD staff would work with the school to get names, seating charts, and contact information for those people.
- HD staff will then notify those close contacts and give guidelines for quarantine.

Student and staff safety is our highest priority. We have many safety measures in place, such as physical distance, masks, and cleaning. These are known to reduce the risk of disease transmission. We are doing this to help reduce the potential of close contacts that would need to quarantine.

Our public notification protocol depends on the situation and we'll notify as the Health Department directs us to. Transparency is important to us, and we are still in the process of determining the best way to keep our families notified of a changing situation. We will be making the most of the next four weeks to get our plan solidified and communicated with our families. We know the unknowns are difficult our families. Please be assured that we are working to get the best process in place that keeps people healthy, notified, and feeling like school is a safe place for their student, or for themselves. We are so grateful for the close relationship we have with the Health Department.

### 2. What will lunch periods look like at each level?

They could look different at each level. We must determine our staffing, scheduling, and space. When that is complete, we will have answers on how lunches will be organized.

### 3. What steps is ECASD taking with high school students to keep the cohorts tight? Since so many students have varied schedules, are they going to be together or will they mix a good deal?

Our modified schedule will limit the number of transitions, classrooms to visit, and can keep cohorts together as much as possible. Controlled transitions and the flow of traffic are important to maintain physical distance, as well. Limiting the courses that are face to face reduces the number of transitions, too.



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**4. Will there be more or less direct instruction this year with limited time in the classroom and limited student-to-student in-person (group work) contact?**

Teachers will plan for five days of learning and will design activities based on when they have students in face-to-face and remote settings, and they will determine the best strategies for learning in each setting.

**5. Are there modifications that will be made for hearing impaired students or those who rely on lip reading and masks?**

We have ordered masks with clear face shields to accommodate staff and students in a speech/language program. Furthermore, the Governor's Order and ECASD rule are consistent in addressing this situation – students and staff in such programs can remove their face coverings for instructional purposes.

**6. Do the instructional days for Cohorts A and B equalize with holidays/days off?**

The 2020-21 ECASD Academic Calendar will be adjusted based on the instructional model that was approved on July 20. This will be discussed at a future Board meeting, and we will be aligning those cohort days as closely as possible.

**7. For our 100% virtual students, when would the learning be synchronous (all students at the same time) and asynchronous (students learning at a time that works for them)?**

When a teacher is working remotely, he or she will create both types of opportunities for students. When teachers have virtual check-ins with students, those will be scheduled in real time. In this model, the staff will create virtual check in times for the student – for individual, small group, or large group.





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**AUGUST 3, 2020**

**1. Who do families call with questions?**

Families can reach out to the child's principal with questions.

**2. Why wouldn't we think about doing virtual for 1 month, then starting hybrid in October?**

Although other districts have chosen this route, our ECASD community had strongly supported either a hybrid or full-attendance five-day a week model in our survey from earlier this month. With over 4000 responses, there were almost 90% of those surveyed who had preferred those two. Consequently, during our close communication with Eau Claire City/County Health Director Lieske Giese and her staff, they are in support of our hybrid/blended model.

**3. If we choose the blended model but then change our mind, will we be able to move to 100% virtual at any time?**

Families that choose this option will only be able to change to virtual instruction during the 2020-21 school year if space permits.

**4. What protocols will exist if my child does not feel safe at school in the hybrid model and want to switch to full online?**

As soon as there is space available in those courses, students will be able to move to the 100% virtual model.

**5. If we chose full virtual will all classes be available including foreign language, art, music, drama, AP, and other specialized electives?**

Yes - we plan on offering all our ECASD courses that students registered for from the past year. We are scheduling students into electives as we have in the past; they may not have had their first choice in the past, but we are following the same model.

**6. If we chose full virtual will my kids be able to participate in school sports or other extra curriculums?**

While we still are unsure about the WIAA and sports for the fall season, we have not heard anything from the WIAA to render virtual students ineligible. However, we have discussed virtual students' ability to participate in co-curricular and other extra-curricular activities. We do believe all students benefit from that time with their peers and a trusted coach or advisor.

**7. What if we are struggling to decide by Wed, Aug 5th?**

If families cannot determine what is best for them, the default for their students is the hybrid-blended model. However, we must get firm commitments from families in order to finalize our staffing in four weeks. Families can view the school board meeting on August 3 for more information (or go to Board Docs to view the video), view the ECASD webpage for our virtual model, and visit our FAQ page, as we will update quickly after the August 3 Board meeting. We must update items on our instructional model and other protocols after the Board meeting to ensure parents get as much information as possible before the evening of August 5.





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### **8. How quickly will classrooms/schools shift to virtual only in the event of a closure?**

If the Eau Claire City County Health Department or State of Wisconsin closes our schools, we will transition to a 100% virtual option as quickly as possible. Prior to having 1:1 devices for all students, we anticipate it could take up to one week. However, if all students had their devices, the transition could be as quickly as one day.

### **9. What cleaning protocols will take place each day? What will happen between groups of students, such as Wednesday or on the weekend?**

Enhanced cleaning protocols have been developed for all facilities in the District. Those protocols can be viewed here: [Daily Cleaning Protocol](#) and [Wednesday/Weekend Cleaning Protocol](#).

### **10. What happens if a student or staff member is diagnosed with COVID-19?**

If an individual is diagnosed with COVID-19, the Eau Claire City-County Health Department will be immediately notified by that person's healthcare provider. The Health Department will then contact the District and provide guidance on actions that should be taken.

### **11. What is the plan for when teachers or students must quarantine? Who will teach and how will instruction be delivered/received?**

We will take direction from the Eau Claire City/County Health Department if students or teachers are quarantined, and after contact tracing is completed, the ECCH Department will direct us to determine how many students/classrooms must be informed and how many will be impacted. Our ECASD teachers will teach the content virtually if they are able; if not, we will have our ECASD substitutes teach the coursework in their absence.





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JULY 23, 2020

**1. If 1st and 2nd graders are at school all four days, will they have 20-25 kids in their classroom at the same time?**

No, the order requires ECASD to comply with the 6-foot social distance requirement. They will have the same ratio of staff to students as other grade levels. The District has repurposed additional spaces and is prepared to secure additional staff to allow for all 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> graders to attend in person.

**2. If students only attend M/T or Th/Fr, will my kids attend school on the same days?**

Yes. The District is committed to assigning students within a family the same day within the A/B rotation. If a student is connected to more than one family/household, that student will be scheduled with at least one of the families within the rotation.

**3. New devices for students will arrive after the start of the school year. How will you ensure all students will have a device at the start of the school year?**

A survey was sent to all families on July 23 asking if they need a District-provided device until the new devices arrive. Based on the survey responses the District will then communicate to families needing a device regarding when and how to pick up the device.

**4. What will the 100% virtual option look like?**

Families who are interested in the 100% virtual option can find more information at [www.ecasd.us/covid-19](http://www.ecasd.us/covid-19).

**5. How can I let the District know I would like to choose the 100% virtual option?**

Families were sent a survey on July 23 and asked to complete it prior to August 1, 2020. The survey asks families to indicate choice in the 100% virtual option.

**6. If we choose the 100% virtual option but then change our mind, will we be able to return to our neighborhood school at any time?**

Families that choose this option will only be able to return to in-person instruction during the 2020-21 school year if space permits.





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**JULY 17, 2020**

**1. How do I find out what Step we are on in the Eau Claire City County Health Plan?**

The Eau Claire City County Health Department updates the status every two weeks. Our current step can be found on the [Eau Claire City County Health COVID-19 Information Hub](#), as well as in the current situation report linked from that hub.

**2. Does my child have to wear the mask provided by the state or can they bring their own?**

Students may wear masks provided by the state or District, or they may wear a mask provided from home.

**3. How will you handle an outbreak if a student or staff-person gets COVID?**

If an individual is diagnosed with COVID-19, the Eau Claire City-County Health Department will be immediately notified by that person's healthcare provider. The Health Department will then contact the District and provide guidance on actions that should be taken.

**4. Will the District return to traditional grading systems or will continue with the pass/fail model?**

Yes, the District will use traditional grading systems, including standards-based for students in grades PreK-5 and A-F for students in grades 6-12.

**5. Will families that opt to enroll in home schooling (registered home school student with the DPI) be allowed to return to specialty programming such as Montessori or Dual Immersion in the future?**

These students will relinquish their seat in those schools and programs. Students on the waiting lists for those schools and programs will then have an opportunity to be a member there. If families who relinquish their seat are interested in returning, they will be placed on the bottom of the waiting list.

**6. What is the plan for sports and extra-curriculars?**

The District will follow Eau Claire City-County Health Department guidelines when it comes to extracurricular activities. We are awaiting additional guidance from the WIAA regarding athletic programs.

