

Jeanice Swift:

Thank you for joining today for this family information session, we're delighted to welcome our students who choose back to our in-school hybrid, learning this spring and have a wonderful group of district in school leaders with us today to help share some additional information for our parents of students with special learning needs and what to expect over this last quarter of the 2021 school year. Ms. Linden.

Introductions

Jeanice Swift:

We look so forward to spring learning together, welcoming and smoothly transitioning our students whose families choose the hybrid learning option as well as continuing to serve our students who are more comfortable remaining in a fully virtual learning plan. We'll characterize our work during these weeks of spring, as always are capable and caring teachers, case managers related service staff, and our paraprofessionals are here to support our students, parents, and families. In addition, your school principal and district leaders, just like all of us on this screen today will be with you in the answering questions. As we move together through the coming weeks from the beginning of the COVID global pandemic, we have stated our core value that upon return our focus and our priority would be to renew and restore that full service approach for art to support our students with special needs.

In particular, we're focusing today on those areas that we know we're all about; continuing with student evaluations, serving academic and skill development needs as well as professional support services. So we'll be focusing in these areas during this information session to make sure that we're setting out all the information possible for our students in parents. Our commitment is that over the continuing weeks, we will continue to focus together to remaining close communication and answer your questions in the very best way possible. We are excited to welcome our students to the Ann Arbor public schools. We know that it's been a hard year and particularly it has been for parents in the students and families of our students with IEP. We recognize that, and we look forward to a time of continued communication and support and growth and development. Whether parents and students choose to return to school during these spring weeks, whether they choose to reenter our in-school learning over the summer or whether they choose to join us in the fall, we will continue to work really into key and critical areas, supporting students with return to in-school learning while also continuing a strong and robust virtual education delivery. We will hold those two priorities alongside the priority of restoration recovery support and continuing the growth and development and watching our students thrive over the coming weeks. And months ahead with that, I know Ms. Linden, that you all have prepared kind of the nuts and bolts of what we know about the transition to in-school learning. Thank you.

Dawn Linden:

Thank you, Dr. Swift. It is our great pleasure to be here with you. And without further ado, let's get right into the information this evening. First we'd like to remind our families about the stages of return. This information has been shared many times, and we know your building principals are sharing it, and we'll share it again with you, but it's always a good idea to begin with some common understandings. So our first stage of students are preschool students. Self-Contained students, preschool students, young fives, and kindergarten students. They'll be returning March 25th. Our second stage, our first and second grade students who will be back for in-person learning. If they choose on April 5th. Our third stage is our third, fourth, and fifth grade students. They will be returning on April 12th, should they choose. And in stage four, that's when we'll be beginning our middle school and secondary students, return on April 12th.

Dawn Linden:

As always before each phase, families can expect to receive a survey about their intentions to either return to in-person or to remain in virtual instruction. We want our families to know in the coming stages, if they have not yet received a survey, you will, and it will be coming very soon to you. In that the survey, you have two very short questions, whether you choose to return to in-person hybrid or whether you would choose to remain in remote settings. Of course our school principals will be sharing information sessions with you just as our elementary teams did during our stage one launch. And so you can look forward to those community meeting dates coming soon from your school principals, just to reiterate, we have a cohorting system so that we can achieve social distancing in our in-person learning. And our students will be separated into cohorts.

So, students will be either in cohort one or cohort two, or they will remain fully remote according to parent choice. And if your student is in cohort one, your students we'll be coming to school on Monday and Tuesday for in-person learning and they will be remote on Thursdays and Fridays. Our Wednesday schedule remains the same as it has during the duration of the school year. If your student is in cohort two, they will be returning for in-person learning on Thursday and Friday of the week. And they will be in remote learning Monday and Tuesday are self-contained. Students will be an in-person learning four days a week. There is a bit of a phased in schedule for our students in self-contained places. So they will be returning for two days on March 25th and 26th. And they will be returning again the following week for two days. That's a Monday and Tuesday on April fifth and six. And then beginning the week of April 12th, our students in self-contained placements will be an in-person learning four days a week, Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday, Friday with of course our regular Wednesday asynchronous schedule.

To help you to envision what hybrid learning might look like, this is an aerial view of the classroom. This could be the layout in your student's classroom. You can see that our desks are spaced six feet apart. You can see that students particularly at the elementary level, maybe using the carpet space for their seating, and you can see those exes are six feet apart. You can see that are kidney shaped table or small group table is in the corner of the room. In many classrooms. There are multiple opportunities for students to sit at small group tables, which will be spaced around the classroom. And you can see that the teacher's center for workspace is at the front of the classroom, nearest all of those wonderful technology hookups.

The students will be engaged in three modes of learning during in-person and during remote. So students will be in whole group with, with all the members of their class. They will be in small group settings with just a couple of classes, classmates or members of their small group. And they will, of course be engaged in some individual instruction. From time to time with their classroom teacher. We look forward to sharing more about that in a secondary facing video, that secondary video will be available later this week, our elementary video about virtual learning is available now on our website and to schools, as our staff begins to prepare to return for in-person learning. We want our families to know that it will involve a transition period. Our teachers will be engaged in professional development. They will be receiving safety training and understanding hybrid learning and all the pieces and parts of that implementation.

And they will also be preparing their classrooms for student return. During the stages of return, teachers will be posting a synchronous lessons in activities for students. We don't want to miss a beat during those three days. So that schedule is here for you for stage one. Students return those asynchronous

lesson days are March 22nd, 23rd, 24th in stage two. Those three days are March 24th, 25th and 26th. And for our stages three and four, those three asynchronous days are April 7th, eighth, and ninth. And now I'm going to hand off to my colleague, Mr. Eric Thompson, to share some special education specific information.

Erik Thompson:

Thank you, Dawn. Today I'm going to talk to you about special education IEPs and evaluations. Our goal is to always implement IEPs fully. While we enter this hybrid stage school teams will review IEP and good faith effort, contingency learning plans to maximize implementation. All outstanding evaluations will be conducted upon return to in-person instruction and evaluations will continue into the summer if necessary. We will prioritize evaluations beginning with those most delayed and steadfastly work to complete all evaluations. And we are pleased to share that school psychologists have already begun scheduling in-person evaluations.

Marianne Fidishin:

Since the beginning of this journey, we have always committed that our first and foremost priority would be the safety, health, and wellness of our students, staff and families. As we move forward to in-person, we are always going to be guided by our super six mitigation strategies. One of the things that as part of our super six mitigation strategies is social distancing. We will do, to the best of our ability, make sure that we achieve a three to six foot distance of social distancing, but we also know for some of our students, they require very hands on instruction and supports. As a result, our staff will have a full cache of PPE materials and supplies that include face shields, gloves, and masks to achieve what's necessary to help our students. Also, we know that masking is very important and it's also very important for our students. As such, we also know that there are some students that masking will present a challenge for them. Our staff will with care and patience work with those students and the families to help them adjust to this very big change for them. Please also keep in mind that we'll have multiple support for students regarding mask wearing. We are going to utilize social stories, visuals, and all our staff have this at hand to help your child adapt to the new and current environment.

Mary Wiese:

We'll talk about supporting your students in our school environment at every stage of the student return. The student response team will be fully in place and ready to support our students whenever it's needed. Individual student intervention plans for behavior and other supports will be reviewed by your case manager and your team to talk about what those need to look like in person, and if any changes need to be made for this new hybrid situation in that planning process, we will also make sure that your student still has access to those sensory rooms and quiet spaces that they might need based on their behavior intervention plan. Building teams will update the student response plan to make sure that all staff are available in the building and that all staff has been trained in order to respond to those situations for our special education supports and services, full services will continue to be delivered according to your student's IEP and GFE CLP. While we are in the hybrid stage of learning, providing in-person services will involve a transition period. So for a short period of time in person, students will continue to receive these services virtually while our service providers are determining new schedules based on the family choices of who will be virtual and who will be in-person paraprofessionals, we'll be providing support for students in person. And we'll also continue to provide supports for students who choose to remain in the remote setting. Now I'll hand it off to Julieanne.

Julieanne Muir:

Now for information regarding recovery services this summer, we have planned robust summer learning and service opportunities available for all of our students with IEPs. There will be a continuation and enhancement of our extended school year services and expansion of our summer academies and intensive reading intervention services programs will range from one week to four weeks of scheduled sessions, and they will be available to all students with IEP services and supports will align with the IEP as a supplement to the special education services that your students receive and are intended to support the achievement and progress on the annual goals. Coming soon will be additional information on the district website concerning our summer learning opportunities. Please look for announcements and consult the district website for additional information.

Marianne Fidishin:

Our caring teachers and case managers understand the need for ongoing communication with our families, teachers and case managers will be contacting parents now through March 17, to communicate plans and respond to any questions that you may have. In addition to this important layer of communication, you will continue to receive updates from your principals, teachers, and service providers about in-person service schedules. As we proceed through hybrid instruction implementation, as always, we invite you to reach out to the school teams with any questions that you may have.

Dawn Linden:

Thank you, everyone. And we would like to share our thanks for every single family and member of our school community. It has been a challenging year. We know that you have had to exercise much patience, and we just appreciate you also very much. We would like to receive your questions and we have a form for you. We will be putting this on the website, you'll be able to access it there. And we'll also make sure it's shared with you in your email so that you can access that form. We're interested in keeping up with you every step of the way and making sure that we get answers to each of your questions. It's going to involve connecting with your school teams to make sure we have every detail covered and communicated before your student returns, if you choose. So thank you. And I think we're ready to head into some question and answer at this time.

Andrew Cluley:

Our panel will now answer some of the questions that we've already received. Our first question is will my child receive his or her related services, speech, OT, et cetera. When they are returned to in-person instruction,

Mary Wiese:

I can take that question Andrew, students will receive their full services according to their IEP and GFECPLs. And that will continue throughout the rest of the school year, there will be a short period of time during this transition that students who are coming into the hybrid situation will continue to receive their services virtually while our case managers and our support service staff are creating new schedules and adjusting to the services. We look forward to making the shift in person services as soon as possible.

Andrew Cluley:

Thank you, Mary. Our next question, my child has been waiting to get an evaluation for special education services for several months. When will this occur?

Erik Thompson:

I can take that one. Andrew as I mentioned in the presentation earlier, special education evaluations will begin to take place in person as soon as possible. A team of school psychologists have already begun working to schedule in-person evaluations for students without standing evaluations. We take, we take this process very seriously and understand the importance and impact and evaluation can have on a child's life. We will work tirelessly to ensure every student has received the appropriate evaluations as soon as possible. And you continue the evaluation process into the summer if necessary.

Andrew Cluley:

Excellent. Erik. Now, when does my child return to school?

Karen Siegel:

Once again, Ann Arbor Public Schools will be phasing students back for hybrid instruction in stages, stage one will be pre-K through 12 students who are in self-contained classrooms, preschool students, young fives, students kindergartens, and in some small groups of students in grades six through 12, we'll be back March 25th and March 26th. Stage two will be our first and second grade students. And they'll begin their return on April 5th for stage three. It will be our upper elementary through third, fourth, and fifth grade students starting April 12th and then stage four will be all our other secondary students. Also beginning, April 12th.

Andrew Cluley:

Thanks Karen. The next question is, will my child be in school four days a week or two days a week?

Marianne Fidishin:

Students in all grades participating in the hybrid instruction will attend in-person two days per week, either Monday and Tuesday or Thursday and Friday, according to their cohort that they have been assigned to students in self-contained classrooms will attend in-person two days per week on Thursday and Friday, March 25th and 26. And on Monday and Tuesday, April 5th and sixth students in secondary grade six through 12 self-contained classrooms will attend for the full day. Beginning, April 12th. Students will attend four days per week. On Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday, Wednesdays will remain asynchronous.

Andrew Cluley:

How will staff help my child with one-to-one help and stay socially distanced

Julieanne Muir:

Staff will do their absolute best to maintain socially distance support that six feet of distancing while supporting and caring for students. But in instances where that is not possible, staff will be wearing masks and other PPE.

Andrew Cluley:

Thank you, Julieanne for talking about how we'll be maintaining our social distance in the classroom. The next question is when will my child's teacher or case manager contact me about my child's IEP and plans for hybrid?

Will Wright:

Teachers and case managers have already begun reaching out to families to communicate plans and respond to any questions you may have. All families of students with an IEP can expect to hear from your providers by March 17th,

Andrew Cluley:

Will my child's paraprofessional continue to support my child?

Janet Schwamb:

Yes, paraprofessionals will serve students in person at school. Students remaining in remote instruction will continue to receive paraprofessional supports in much the same way. Moving forward. We've mentioned previously that additional PPE is provided to staff who will need to be in close contact with students to provide that support.

Andrew Cluley:

Thank you, Janet. Our next question, my child currently has a G F E C L P. When will their full IEP be back in place?

Julieanne Muir:

Whether students participate in in-school hybrid learning or continue with virtual learning full special education services will continue to be delivered according to the student's IEP and GFECPL. Upon return to in-school learning building teams will review all IEP is to assess whether the full extent of the IEP can be implemented during the in-school hybrid instruction phase. It is important to remember that while we remain in a hybrid situation, every effort will be made to implement IEP as written.

Andrew Cluley:

Thank you, Juliane our next question. What about recovery services? When will that happen?

Marianne Fidishin:

Recovery services will be available to all students with an IEP, especially those who've been identified as recovery service eligible in IEP meetings during remote and hybrid learning. Many students received good faith effort, contingency learning plans to accommodate limitations in these settings. Our goal is to begin to recover these services and supports over the coming weeks and months.

An important part of this planning is the continuation of robust summer learning and service opportunities for our students with IEP family can a continuation and enhancement of extended school year, summer academies and intensive reading interventions. These programs range from one to four week sessions,

Andrew Cluley:

Will the buildings be ready for our children to return?

Janet Schwamb:

The facilities department has worked diligently to ensure that our buildings are prepared according to the CDC protocol. That means for disinfecting and cleaning, updated ventilation systems and water filtration. Also there will be signage to guide students throughout the building in a socially distanced manner.

Andrew Cluley:

If I only want my child in a self-contained placement to attend two days per week, instead of four, can we do that?

Marianne Fidishin:

Students in self-contained classrooms who select hybrid are scheduled to attend four days a week, beginning, April 12th, should a parent wish to keep their child at home for two of those days, they may do so. According to a set schedule arranged with the building principal and the classroom teacher.

Andrew Cluley:

Thank you, Marianne. Our next question, I would like for my child to stay virtual, but I want them to have their speech OT resource services in person. Can we arrange drop-in services?

Will Wright:

We recognize that some families are wondering about this question and we are working to consider ways to support it. Due to distancing, cohorting scheduling among multiple service providers and restrictions for families entering the building, we face some challenges in accommodating special schedules for students. We will share more information over the coming days.

Andrew Cluley:

Thanks, Will. Our next question, my child attends early on programming. When will they get in-person services?

Mary Wiese:

I can answer that Andrew, early on, community-based preschool and services for our students and non-public schools will begin to transition to in-person services. On April 12th, your student's teacher, our case manager will contact you to discuss the process and help you make the best decision for your student. So since early on has a huge parent coaching component and takes place in the student's naturally occurring environment, which is often their home. It will be important to discuss the best options for your student and family, with your providers. We've been working directly with WISD early on coordinator to create guidelines, to help us in making these decisions. And they'll be based on what type of progress your student has been making on a virtual delivery model preferences of your family, of course, and health and safety guidelines.

Andrew Cluley:

Thank you, Mary. Our next question. What happens when a child needs a medical treatment, sensory room breaks and CPI, how will staff maintain six feet of distancing?

Erik Thompson:

I'd like to let you all know that our outstanding nurses have worked tirelessly to prepare guidelines, to ensure safe assistance for medical procedures, such as feeding and toileting. And as Julianne had stated earlier, staff will do their absolute best to maintain social distancing. But for instances in which that is not possible, staff will be wearing masks and other PPE.

Andrew Cluley:

Thanks. When will I find out which cohort my student is in?

Karen Siegel:

For the most part students will be attending cohorts based on the first letter of the student last name. So A through L will attend cohort one and M through Z will attend cohort two. However, in instances where siblings might not have the same name or other circumstances where we need to achieve balance principals are working with school teams in order to finalize the cohorts. And those will be communicated with families as soon as possible at the building level.

Andrew Cluley:

Thank you, Karen will ESY be in-person or virtual.

Marianne Fidishin:

Thank you, Andrew. I'll take this question. We plan to offer robust in-person ESY programming the summer, as well as some virtual options and opportunities.

Andrew Cluley:

Thank you, Marianne. For our final question, will my child who is a student with ASD, be able to visit the building prior to returning in person, since he's never been in the building, he needs to know where his classrooms are and in particular, the bathroom as he isn't aware of his needs prior to needing to go to the bathroom?

Janet Schwamb:

I'm happy to answer that question, Andrew. For the purposes of health and safety, we are unable to have building tours in advance of in-person instruction. However, building principals and teachers will be sharing video tours and reaching out with social stories and other supports to serve this purpose.

Andrew Cluley:

I want to thank our panel for answering these questions today, but we know that there are more questions that you may have. Please feel free to enter your question on the form from the email that we sent last week, or right on this webpage. We'll be continuing to monitor those questions and get back to you with the answers as soon as we can.



Jeanice Swift:

This pandemic year has been an especially challenging time for our parents and families and students with specialized learning needs our work to support our students and families we serve is focused into key and critical areas. First to support those students who will make the transition to in-school hybrid learning and just as strongly to continue to support our students and families who are most comfortable remaining in that fully virtual learning environment. We have understood from the outset of this pandemic, that at the time of return, we would be on a full court press to support our students in enriching and fulfilling their learning needs. Well, now it's game time and we're excited to welcome our students back to in-school learning over the coming weeks. Our commitment is to mobilize every resource to remain in close communication, and particularly to have our focus on completing evaluations, on the academic learning and skill development on social, emotional development and growth.

Our commitment during this time is to mobilize every resource. We are focused on completing evaluations on academic learning and skill development on social, emotional growth on the provision of professional support services. And we know that during this time it will be especially important to remain in close communication and partnership. It's our communication and partnership that enables us to achieve our shared goal of the learning and development growth and thriving of our Ann Arbor Public Schools students. We have missed our students during this time, and we've missed getting to see you with us in the school environment. We look so forward to welcoming you back to our schools over the coming weeks and also to connecting with our parents virtually as well. It is a time of hope and optimism, a time to move forward. Thank you for your time. We looked so forward to welcoming our students back to an in school learning opportunity. We look forward to seeing you at school and also to meeting and connecting with our parents virtually. It is truly a time of hope and optimism taking our next steps together and moving forward. Thank you for your time today and thank you for your support of our children, of our staff and of the Ann Arbor Public Schools.