

COVID-19 Preparedness and Response Plan

Name of District: Athens Area Schools

Address of District: 4320 K Drive South East Leroy, MI 49051

District Code Number: 13050

Web Address of the District: athensk12.org

Name of Intermediate School District: Calhoun Intermediate School District

Name of Authorizing Body (if applicable): Not applicable

Preparedness Plan Introduction

Governor Whitmer's [Executive Order 2020-142](#) "provides a structure to support all schools in Michigan as they plan for a return of pre-K-12 education in the fall. Under the order, school districts must adopt a COVID-19 Preparedness and Response Plan laying out how they will cope with the disease across the various phases of the [Michigan Safe Start Plan](#). In turn, the accompanying Michigan Return to School Roadmap offers a guide to the types of safety protocols appropriate during each phase. There's no one-size-fits-all solution: What works in Lansing may not work in Sault Sainte Marie. Districts will retain the flexibility to tailor their instruction to their particular needs and to the disease conditions present in their regions." (EO-2020-142)

Each district (public, public school academy (PSA), nonpublic, and intermediate school district (ISD) that educates pre-K-12 students) shall submit a single completed Assurance Document and Preparedness Plan to its Board in time for approval by August 15 or seven days before the first day of school, whichever comes first. This template, when completed, serves as a single Assurance Document and Preparedness Plan.

The Preparedness Plan will be collected by the Intermediate School District for public school districts, the authorizing body for public school academies, or the chief/designated school administrator for nonpublic schools for transmission to the State Superintendent of Public Instruction and State Treasurer by August 17, 2020. Additionally, this Preparedness Plan must be posted on the district's/PSA's, or nonpublic school's public website home page no later than August 17, 2020. A single application should be filed by the district rather than multiple applications for individual schools within a district.

Preparedness Plan Assurances

The District agrees to meet all of the following requirements of Executive Order 2020-142

- ✓ The District assures that when it provides in-person instruction to its students without disabilities, the district must also provide in-person instruction to its students with disabilities, consistent with their individualized education programs (IEPs).
- ✓ The District assures that when schools are closed to in-person instruction, districts must strive in good faith and to the extent practicable, based upon available resources, technology, training, and curriculum, as well as the circumstances presented by COVID-19, to provide equal access to any alternative modes of instruction to students with disabilities from birth through age 26. This assurance includes the provision of auxiliary services under section 1296 of the Revised School Code, MCL 380.1296.
- ✓ The District assures that while any state of emergency or disaster related to the COVID-19 pandemic continues, it shall comply with guidance from the United States Department of Education, including its Office of Civil Rights and Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, and the Michigan Department of Education concerning the delivery of alternative modes of instruction to students with disabilities in light of the impact of COVID-19.
- ✓ The District assures that it shall, to the extent practicable and necessary, make individualized determinations whether and to what extent compensatory services may be needed for students with disabilities in light of the school closures during the 2019–2020 school year.
- ✓ The District assures that during **Phase 1, 2, or 3** of the *Michigan Safe Start Plan* it will close its buildings to anyone except: (a) District employees or contractors necessary to conduct minimum basic school operations consistent with a Preparedness Plan, including those employers or contractors necessary to facilitate alternative modes of instruction, such as distributing materials and equipment or performing other necessary in-person functions. (b) Food-service workers preparing food for distribution to students or their families. (c) Licensed child-care providers and the families that they serve, if providers follow all emergency protocols identified by the state.
- ✓ The District assures that during **Phase 1, 2, or 3** of the *Michigan Safe Start Plan* it will suspend athletics, after-school activities, inter-school activities, and busing.
- ✓ The District assures that during **Phase 1, 2, or 3** of the *Michigan Safe Start Plan* it will provide for the continued pay of school employees while redeploying staff to provide meaningful work in the context of the Preparedness Plan, subject to any applicable requirements of a collective bargaining agreement.
- ✓ The District assures that in **Phases 1, 2, or 3** of the *Michigan Safe Start Plan* it will provide for the continuation of food distribution to eligible students.
- ✓ The District assures that during **Phase 4** of the *Michigan Safe Start Plan* it will prohibit indoor assemblies that bring together students from more than one classroom.
- ✓ The District assures cooperation with the local public health department if a confirmed case of COVID-19 is identified, and agrees to collect the contact information for any close contacts of the affected individual from two days before he or she showed symptoms to the time when he or she was last present in school.

Preparedness Plan

Every district must develop and adopt a COVID-19 Preparedness and Response Plan ("Preparedness Plan") that is informed by [Michigan's 2020-21 Return to School Roadmap](#) ("Return to School Roadmap") from the COVID-19 Task Force on Education and Return to School Advisory Council.

In accordance with Executive Order 2020-142 a plan must include all the following parts:

- A. The policies and procedures that the District will follow when the region in which the district is located is in **Phase 1, 2, or 3** of the *Michigan Safe Start Plan*.
 1. Describe how the district will offer alternative modes of instruction other than in-person instruction and a summary of materials each student and the student's parents or guardians will need to meaningfully access the alternative modes of instruction included in the Preparedness Plan. If the Preparedness Plan relies on electronic instruction, the Preparedness Plan must consider how the district will aid students who lack access to computers or to the internet. This is also in the Continuity of Learning and COVID-19 Response Plan submitted in April. You may want to update and link to this plan in your response below.

Athens Area Schools will provide two different learning tracks. The first learning track will be a distance learning option for parents and students when the State of Michigan is in Phases 1-3 of the *Michigan Safe Start Plan*. This distance learning option will be operated by Athens Area Schools' staff. Materials which will be a part of this distance learning option will include short lesson videos recorded and prepared by classroom teachers. Additional materials include handouts, project descriptions, student assignments and other documents which are helpful in teaching objectives. and learning for students.

Lesson videos will be uploaded to Google Classroom. These videos will be made available to all K-12 students and will be asynchronous in nature. These lesson videos will be created for each subject area and will be available to students via Google Classroom. The aforementioned documents will be provided to students on a weekly basis as well. In addition to providing lesson videos and documents, teachers of record will hold routine open office hours, virtual meetings, and will provide feedback on completed work students complete. Documented two-way communication will also occur via emails and phone calls made routinely by a district staff member.

In addition to this learning track, the second learning track which will be offered will be a completely virtual learning option. Parents will be able to opt-in to this up until the first day of school. It will differ in its delivery of content. This completely virtual learning experience will be purchased through a third party vendor but will be overseen by Athens Area Schools staff. It will be provided for those students whose parents/guardians are not comfortable sending students to school for face-to-face learning and who have chosen to opt out of face-to-face learning (assuming the State of Michigan is in Phase Four on the first day of school).

Students will be trained and taught how to use Google Classroom beginning the first week of school regardless of which phase the State of Michigan happens to be in at that time. Should Phase Four be in effect on the first day of school, getting students familiar with Google Classroom will be of utmost importance to produce fluid and smooth movement between face-to-face learning (when the state is in Phases 4-6) and the distance learning option, described in this response previously, when and if the state moves into Phases 1-3.

In addition to training students on the use of Google Classroom, school district personnel will provide families with chromebooks for those students who need them and do not have a personal device to use during distance learning. In addition to chromebooks, two USB drives will be distributed to each student not having internet connectivity in their home. The aforementioned videos and documents will be uploaded to USB drives by district staff and delivered weekly to homes using school buses. Students will have the ability to upload documents to their chromebooks if they are unable to access Google Classroom due to not being able to connect to the internet. Staff at Athens Area Schools will explore the viability of providing internet access to those in the community who have this need.

B. The policies and procedures that the District will follow when the region in which the District is located is in **Phase 4** of the Michigan Safe Start Plan. Those policies and procedures must, at a minimum, include:

1. **Face coverings** (p. 22)

- a. Please describe how the district will implement **requirements** for facial coverings that at a minimum require the wearing of face coverings, except during meals and unless face coverings cannot be medically tolerated, for:
- i) All staff and all students in grades preK-12 when on a school bus.
 - ii) All staff and all students in grades preK-12 when in indoor hallways and common areas.
 - iii) All staff when in classrooms.
 - iv) All students in grades 6 and up when in classrooms.
 - v) All students in grades kindergarten through grade 5 unless students remain with their classes throughout the school day and do not come into close contact with students in another class.

The use of face masks has been considered for students in grades K-5 when they are in the classroom. A plan to keep these students self-contained in a classroom throughout the day has been created and as a result, students in these grades will not be wearing a face mask when in the classroom. The plan for ensuring face masks are worn in the following areas is as follows:

1. **All staff and students when on a bus:**

Disposable face masks will be made available to all students each day and will be available on the bus should a student not possess one of their own. In addition, face masks will be provided to all staff regardless of their role. These masks are reusable with each staff member ensuring that his/her face mask is cleaned and disinfected routinely. Bus drivers and other personnel riding the bus during a bus route will be required to wear a face mask unless medically unable to do so.

2. **All staff and students when in indoor hallways and common areas:**

As stated previously, disposable face masks will be made available to students in the event they do not possess one. When students are moving into a common area as a class, the teacher of record will ensure all students are wearing a face mask. Kindergarten through Grade Five teachers, in cooperation with the school nurse, will teach the appropriate classroom procedure for maintaining face masks in the classroom, when students will need to wear them, etc. For Grades 6-12, all students will be wearing face masks unless exercising outside, eating, or medically unable to do so. As a result, there will be no need for them to put masks on when moving into a common area since students will already be wearing them. Staff members will ensure all students are wearing face masks.

3. **All staff when in classrooms:**

Before students report for the first day of school, it will be explained to district staff that they will be required to wear face masks and that masks will be provided to them.

4. **All students in Grades Six and up when in classrooms:**

As previously mentioned, students will have access to disposable face masks if they do not possess one. Teachers and other staff will ensure all students are wearing face masks all day. It is hoped that this will become part of the culture of the school similar to that of not running in the halls.

5. **All students in grades Kindergarten through Grade 5 unless students remain with their classes throughout the school day and do not come into close contact with students in another class:** A plan for keeping students in Grades K-5 self-contained and separate from students in other classes has been developed. Items in this plan include the following:

- When students are transitioning throughout the school building they will be wearing masks.
- Instructors of elective classes will push into classrooms rather than having students move to their classrooms. This will eliminate the need for students to move throughout the building to receive these services.
- Individually packaged meals will be provided to individual students.
- When students engage in recess activities, each class will be assigned a portion of the playground for that day. A station activity will be provided for students to participate in.

Each day, classes will rotate stations and areas of the playground so that students will be provided a variety of activities in which to engage throughout the week.

2. Hygiene

Please describe how you will implement the **requirements** for hygiene protocols from the *Return to School Roadmap* (p. 22-23).

Athens Area Schools will have hand sanitizer readily available in each classroom. In addition, hand sanitizer stations will be established throughout the facilities including common areas and entrances to each classroom. Hand sanitizing stations have also been installed on entrances to buses. The school nurse will develop and implement a training program for students on proper handwashing and hygiene as well as screening protocols for students and staff. Lessons developed and presented by the school nurse will be reinforced by teachers as well as with periodic review and daily practice. The school nurse will locate and post signage around each school building reminding students, staff and building visitors about the importance of appropriate hygiene processes. All protocols will be developed in accordance with Calhoun County Health Department guidelines.

Athens Area Schools administration will work with DM Burr, a custodial company contracted to clean school district facilities, to establish a schedule for checking soap and hand sanitizer availability as well as refilling soap and hand sanitizer stations. At the K-5 level, when students take bathroom breaks as a class, the teacher will provide disposable towels to students to dry their hands after washing them. This will allow students to avoid using the hand dryer which is operated manually by pushing a button. At the 6-12 level, hand dryers are operated by a sensor which allows for each individual to easily dry his or her hands with "no touch".

3. Cleaning

Please describe how you will implement the **requirements** for cleaning protocols from the *Return to School Roadmap* (p. 27).

In concert with DM Burr, schedules for checking soap/sanitizer levels will be created and posted. In addition, cleaning protocols for all required areas will be created and posted. These protocols will include the frequency of cleaning for these areas. Any areas that have multiple student groups moving through them, will be sanitized between groups. Appropriate cleaning material and PPE will be provided to cleaning personnel by the district or by DM Burr. This includes gloves, surgical masks, and face shields. Also, the school district has purchased three commercial sanitizing foggers which will allow district and custodial personnel to quickly sanitize any areas that may need disinfected quickly. Two backpack foggers have also been purchased for quickly disinfecting buses between runs. In total, five foggers have been purchased.

4. Athletics

Please describe how you will implement the **requirements** for athletics protocols from the *Return to School Roadmap* (p. 27).

The Athens Area Schools Athletic Director will review and become familiar with the guidance published by the MHSAA and share this information with the entire coaching staff, students, and parents. Proper handwashing and other appropriate hygiene measures will also be taught, monitored, and enforced, as will the cleaning of all equipment. Individual water bottles will be utilized instead of group hydration stations. State requirements for spectators will be communicated to parents and appropriate signage

will be used as well.

Once students have been transported for athletic events, buses will be fogged to disinfect them and prepare them for their next run. During athletic events, counters will be used as people enter to ensure the appropriate limit is maintained for each specific phase of reopening the state may be in at that time. School district personnel will observe conditions as the event occurs to ensure proper spacing of spectators is maintained.

5. Screening

Please describe how you will implement the **requirements** for screening protocols from the *Return to School Roadmap* (p. 24).

Items included in screening protocols include the following:

- A screening and exposure plan has been created with the Calhoun County Health Department (CCHD). This plan will be reviewed monthly by district personnel and the health department along with the status of any referrals from the prior month.
- Each school building has identified a remote and secluded room, to serve as an isolation area. This room will be outfitted with appropriate PPE.
- From the time of identification of potential infection, a student will not be left unmonitored until the student or staff member is safely removed from the building.
- Parent communication will be made immediately with clear and concise directions on where and how to pick up the student and where to report for testing.
- During the time of quarantine, the student will be asked to self identify the location and individuals they came into contact with for the past 48 hours to the best of their recollection. Priority will be placed on those individuals that they were in contact with for a sustained 15 minutes or more.
- All school staff will be required to conduct a health safety self assessment at home prior to coming to work.
- Staff who are unable to work due to displaying COVID-19 symptoms will be asked to report this to the school in a timely fashion.
- Positive tests for staff members will result in a required quarantine away from school for such a length of time as prescribed by the Calhoun County Health Department.

6. Testing

Please describe how you will implement the **requirements** for testing protocols from the *Return to School Roadmap* (p. 25).

Close contact is defined as a person being within 6 feet of an infected person for more than 15 minutes. Using that definition, district personnel have already been working with the CCHD establishing appropriate testing procedures for students and staff. If/when a student, staff member, or visitor tests positive for the COVID-19 virus, the district will follow CCHD directives in responding appropriately. This includes communicating to impacted individuals such students and parents, as well as implementing appropriate quarantine procedures.

7. Busing and Student Transportation

Please describe how you will implement the **requirements** for busing and student transportation protocols from the *Return to School Roadmap* (p. 28).

Athens Area Schools has ordered and installed hand sanitizer dispensers for all buses with appropriate backups as needed. Students and drivers will be instructed to use the sanitizer upon entering all school transportation vehicles. Face masks will be required of all passengers and drivers as defined in the *Michigan Safe Schools Return to School Roadmap*. A supply of face masks will be available on

each bus for any individual who needs one. Bus drivers will be informed of any students who are unable to wear masks for medical reasons. Each bus will be sanitized using the two battery power sanitizing foggers after each run. Transportation protocols for sick students have been established. No student that has been confirmed or is suspected of having COVID-19 will be allowed to be transported by a school vehicle. In addition, bus cleaning schedules have been created and implemented in an effort to ensure they are disinfected after each bus run. Weather permitting, bus drivers will keep windows open on the bus both en route and when buses are stationary.

C. Describe the policies and procedures that the district will follow when the region in which the district is located is in Phase 5 of the Michigan Safe Start Plan.

All of the aforementioned policies and procedures will be considered "strongly recommended" to staff and students in the event the State of Michigan reaches Phase Five of the Michigan Safe Start Plan.

1. Indicate which highly recommended protocols from the *Return to School Roadmap* the district will include in its Preparedness Plan when the region in which the district is located is in Phase 5 of the *Michigan Safe Start Plan*.

Students and staff will continue to be educated on proper hand washing and hygiene protocols. An "isolation room" will continue to exist with a staff member designated to care for those students who may be exhibiting symptoms related to COVID-19. Symptomatic students will continue to be sent home from school and should be kept at home until students are allowed to reenter school according to CCHD guidance. We will also encourage all students, staff, and parents to monitor their own health and conduct daily self-examinations such as taking temperatures.

Face masks will be provided for those students and staff who request them thus raising the comfort level of individual staff members and students. Established cleaning protocols and procedures in high use areas, buses, and common areas will continue to be utilized as appropriate. Face masks will be considered for K-5 students and students with special needs in classrooms as well as in hallways and common areas. In addition, face masks will continue to be provided for students and staff members who would like to wear them. Strict records, including date and time, will be kept of non-school employees in regards to entering the building during school hours.

2. Indicate which highly recommended protocols from the *Return to School Roadmap* the district will not include in its Preparedness Plan when the region in which the district is located is in Phase 5 of the *Michigan Safe Start Plan*.

The following recommended protocols will not be included in the Preparedness Plan if the State of Michigan enters Phase Five in an area in which the school district is located:

- Space desks six feet apart in classrooms.
- Class sizes should be kept to the level afforded by necessary spacing requirements.
- Teachers should maintain six feet of spacing between themselves and students as much as possible.
- Floor tape or other markers should be used at six foot intervals where line formation is anticipated.
- Provide social distancing floor/seating markings in waiting and reception areas.
- Adult guests entering the building should be screened for symptoms, wear a face mask, and wash/sanitize hands prior to entering.
- Ensuring students in grades K-5 are kept separate from students in other classes.
- Students in grades 6-12 will not be required to wear masks unless they prefer to do so voluntarily. Face masks will continue to be provided for students and staff members who would like to continue to wear them.

- Arrival and dismissal procedures will be used which were formerly utilized in pre-COVID times.

D. After considering all the protocols that are highly recommended in the *Return to School Roadmap*, please indicate if a school plans to exclude protocols that are highly recommended for any of the categories above in **Phase 4**.

Yes.

Final Steps for Submission

Each district shall submit a single completed Assurance Document and Preparedness Plan to its Board of Education (in the case of a PSA, the Academy Board of Directors; in the case of a nonpublic school, the chief or designated school administrator) in time for approval by August 15 or seven days before the first day of school, whichever comes first.

Date of Approval by the District Board of Education, PSA Board of Directors, or nonpublic school chief/designated school administrator: August 05, 2020

Link to the Board Meeting Minutes or Signature of Board President, or signature of nonpublic school chief/designated school administrator:

Link to the approved Plan posted on the District/PSA/nonpublic school website:

Name of Superintendent Submitting Plan: Joseph C Huepenbecker

Date Received by the ISD/Authorizing Body/Chief or designated School Administrator: August 06, 2020

Date Submitted to State Superintendent and State Treasurer: August ____, 2020



**Athens Area Schools
Board President**