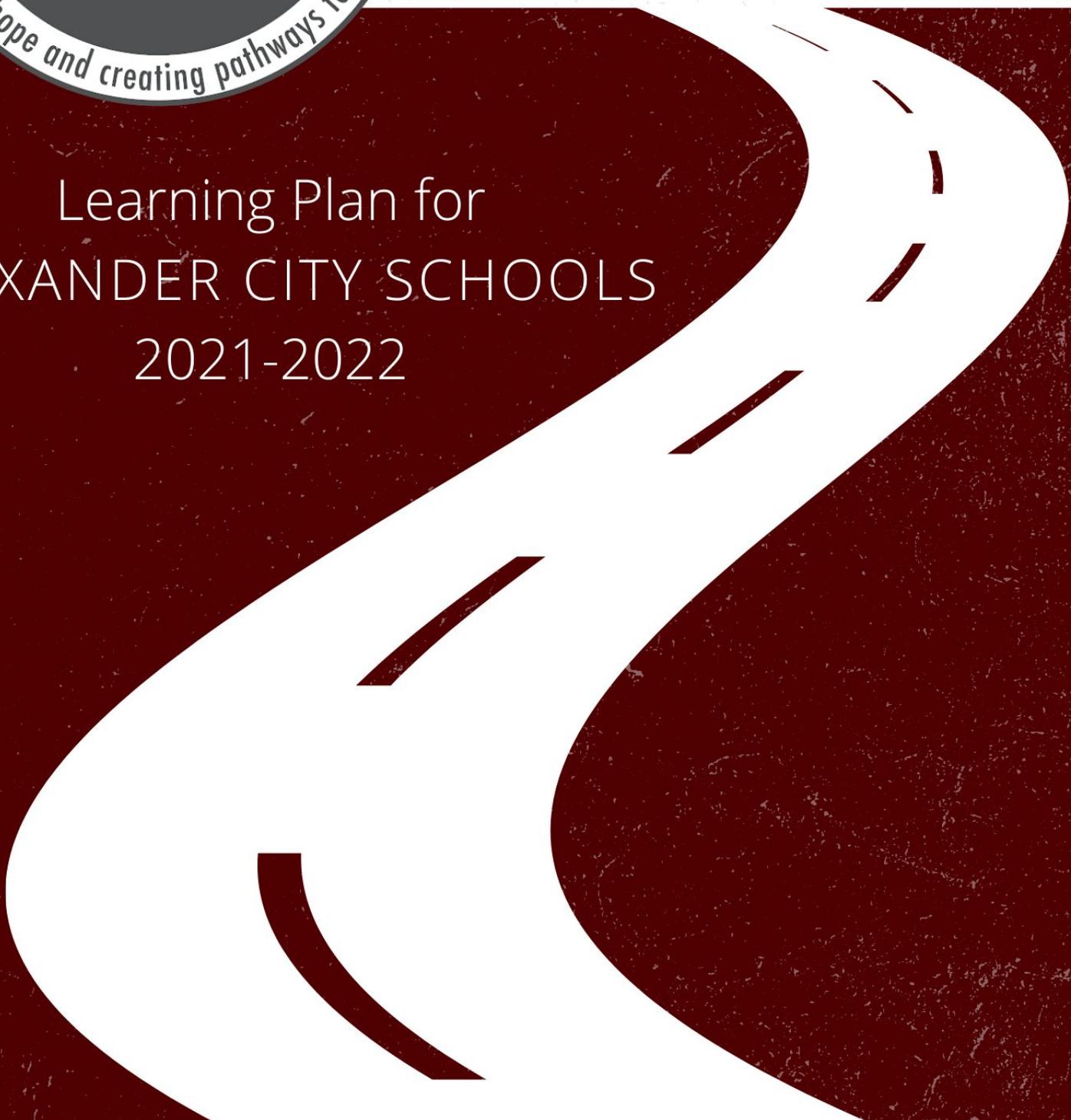




# JOURNEY FORWARD

Learning Plan for  
ALEXANDER CITY SCHOOLS  
2021-2022



# Acknowledgement & Disclaimer

**Special appreciation is extended to the educators, community members and state and local leadership teams who contributed to the provision of data and development of this document.**

The Alexander City Schools “21-22 Journey Forward Learning Plan” is provided as interim guidance and does not constitute legal or medical advice, or circumvent any applicable laws, policies, or mandates established by federal, state, or local agencies. This document is put in place in an effort to return, and sustain, in-person learning based on recovery efforts related to the global pandemic associated with the Coronavirus.

All information, content, and materials available in this document are for general informational purposes only and should be viewed as advisory unless it’s specifically authorized by state statute, according to Alabama Code section. Guidance contained within this document has been updated based on current evidence and information available at the time of publishing provided by the Alabama State Department of Education and the Alabama State Department of Public Health. We acknowledge that situations pertaining to the pandemic are ever changing and guidance will be regularly reviewed with regards to the evolving nature of the pandemic and emerging evidence. Should it become necessary for our faculty, staff, and students to engage in non-traditional instruction due to a change in public health recommendations, ACS reserves the right to do so, as a last resort. This document will be reviewed in accordance with the American Rescue Plan (ARP) and ESSER requirements. Tentative review dates are October 21, 2021, December 16, 2021, March 24, 2022 and May 12, 2022. These dates are subject to change.

This document may contain links to other third-party websites. Such links are only for the convenience of the reader or user. Alexander City Schools does not recommend or endorse third-party vendors unless stipulated herein as a “partner” in education for providing curricular content to best serve our students.

Finally, the Alexander City Schools Board of Education acknowledges that the implementation of guidelines and policies contained within this 2021-2022 Journey Forward plan, as it relates to COVID-19, are intended to mitigate, not eliminate, risk. No single action or set of actions will completely eliminate the risk of SARS-CoV-2 transmission, but implementation of several coordinated interventions can greatly reduce that risk.



# Guiding Principles

---

Alexander City Schools will continue the established five guiding principles as we enter the 2021-2022 school year and initiate the Journey Forward Learning Plan. The Alexander City Schools' *Journey Forward Learning Plan* is rooted in the vision and mission of our system and aligns with these five guiding principles.

- 1** → **We will be transparent. We will share what we know and what we do not know and be clear about what we can control and what is outside of our control.**
- 2** → **We will be equitable. We will center decisions on what is best for all students, families, and educators.**
- 3** → **We will listen. We will bring together diverse stakeholders and experts to understand realities on the ground and to surface creative solutions.**
- 4** → **We will put safety first. We will leverage science, data, and public health leadership to inform the choices we make.**
- 5** → **We will be decisive. Given the size and scope of the challenge, we must move deliberately and make tough choices. We may need to adapt and if so, we will adapt quickly.**

# Our Commitment to You

Dear Parents and Guardians,

As many of you are aware, President Biden recently signed the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act, Public Law 117-2, into law. This Act provides additional funding (\$122 billion) to schools across the nation as the next phase of the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER). These additional funds were allocated to assist school districts prepare for reopening and sustaining the day-to-day operations of school. Additionally, the funds were also allocated to reduce the impacts associated with effects of the COVID-19 on our students. In short, the purpose of the additional funding is to support local educational agencies (LEAs) in preparing for, and responding to the impacts of COVID-19 on educators, students, and families.



A requirement set forth by the ARP Act is that each LEA develop a **plan** to return to in-person learning and plans to sustain the continuity of services provide by schools. Alexander City Schools safe to return plan will be identified as the *2021-2022 Journey Forward Learning Plan*. As required, the plan will be posted within 30 days of receiving funding on the district's website and reviewed periodically by a committee for feedback and amendments. The dates for review and committee members will be posted once they are secured.

In keeping with the latest research findings, our *2021-2022 Journey Forward Learning Plan*, focuses on the most effective strategies to accelerate and remediate learning in the coming year. To achieve the positive results desired for our students, we will have a systematic approach to monitor and verify learning so that critical skills and concepts identified, reinforced and accessed throughout the year.

A portion of our *Journey Forward* plan has already begun. Summer learning opportunities at every level started early June and will continue through the middle of July. From elementary summer reading camps, to traditional summer school and credit recovery at the secondary level, students identified with academic deficits were giving opportunities to close the gap with no cost to our parents. Many more initiatives are on the horizon and will be introduced as we begin the new school year.

In addition to new academic learning supports, our Journey Forward plan also identifies areas of focus in health and safety, operations, social and emotional learning, and technology. Each category has been carefully identified and will continue to be revisited and monitored throughout the year for continuous improvement. All categories are explained within the plan document.

It is our goal and desire to bring back a level of normalcy for our students, teachers, and parents during the 2021-2022 school year! We will continue to seek and follow the guidance from the Alabama State Department of Education, Alabama Department of Public Health, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and our local health care and leadership teams.

We look forward to working with you and making the 2021-2022 school year an amazing year!

Dr. Keith Lankford

2021-2022



# Protocols (snap shot)

---

## Confirmed Diagnosis of Student/Staff for COVID-19 (ACS will comply with the guidance from the Alabama Department of Public Health)

- Parent/Staff should alert the school nurse and/or principal immediately of positive test results.
- School officials will notify the District Nurse that a positive case has been confirmed. Staff/Student will quarantine in accordance with ADPH guidelines.
- Classrooms will be sanitized and cleaned immediately after notification of a positive diagnosis.
- Access to the general public will be limited for the first nine weeks. After the first nine weeks ACS will assess the situation and each school will issue their protocols for public access to their building.
- ACS will not be responsible for contact tracing, as it is the responsibility of the Alabama Department of Public Health.
- Students or staff with *confirmed* COVID-19 should remain home until completely recovered and no longer displaying symptoms (ADPH generally requires 10 days with a 24-hour period of being fever-free without medication).
- Class work will be offered through the Blended Instructional Model during the quarantine phase for students confirmed and exposed.

## COVID-19 Exposure in the Home/School

- Students or employees exposed to a *confirmed* individual within the home should self-quarantine for 10 days while symptoms are monitored. (If the individual is fully vaccinated or diagnosed positive within the previous 90 days, the individual will not be required to quarantine.)
- ACS guidelines will define exposure as *close proximity (within 3 feet) for a duration of more than 15 minutes*. ACS will not consider an entire class as exposed if a student or faculty member in the class tests positive, as the exposure level will be determined by ADPH protocols.
- Any school employee who has knowledge of exposure defined by the 3-15 rule will contact the school nurse or principal immediately who will follow ADPH guidelines regarding exposure.

## Faculty and Staff

- This year employees can use any combination of sick, personal or vacation if they are COVID-19 positive or are quarantined due to exposure.
- Currently there is no plan to allow remote work.

To comply with [HIPAA](#) and [FERPA](#), no personal information will be released.



# ACS Learning Environment Facts

## Return to Traditional Brick and Mortar

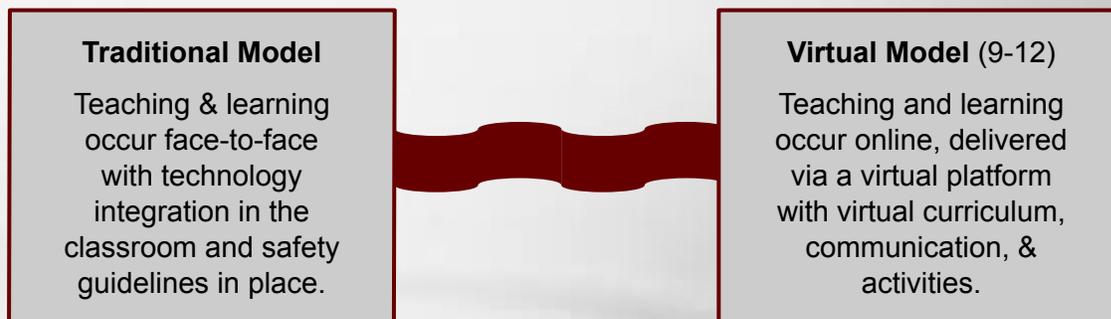
Under the ACS Journey Forward Plan, it is the expectation that all students will attend face-to-face instruction for the 2021-22 school year. ACS will begin face-to-face instruction on August 18, 2021.

The only virtual option offered by ACS will be for grades 9-12. Pursuant to Alabama Act No. 2015-89, Alexander City Schools must provide students in grades 9-12 with a virtual option. Admission to the virtual option will be dependent upon the application process and the student meeting all criteria. For students in grades 9-12 that are interested in the virtual option, you may access additional information using this [link](#).

As we continue our Journey Forward, each school will continue to adhere to safety procedures, distancing guidelines and best practices provided by the Alabama State Department of Education in order to minimize the potential for a COVID-19 outbreak and/or the spread of any infectious disease.

## Instructional Implications

Face-to-face instruction will be the foundation of our instructional program. As we continue to prepare our students for a global society and to navigate the technological landscape, we will continue to integrate technology into our daily lessons and activities. All methods of instructional delivery will concentrate on the Alabama Course of Study with an emphasis on essential standards in grades K-8, as well as required standards for high school graduation credits in grades 9-12.



## **Special Populations Implications (Special Education, 504, ELL)**

Students with individualized education plans, such as IEPs, 504, I-ELPs, will have services provided in the face-to-face educational setting. The appropriate and responsible committee will monitor the progress of these students to insure that their plans are being implemented to offer the student the greatest opportunity for success.

## **Intervention/Enrichment Implications**

The ACS Journey Forward Plan recognizes that the mitigating factors that arose from the pandemic may have caused gaps in learning for students. The gaps will be address with the implementation of the Multi-Tiered System of Supports for students. This will begin with diagnostic and prescriptive assessment at the beginning of the school year for all students in grades K-12. This data will be used to identify strengths and weaknesses. Teachers will use the data to inform their whole group instruction and to plan for the use of small group strategies. Students with significant needs will be provided intervention and those with the need for enrichment will be provided enrichment opportunities. Intervention and enrichment will be addressed with additional personnel and programs designed to fit the specific need of the student.

## **Social Emotional Health Implications**

The ACS Journey Forward Plan recognizes that many of the effects of the pandemic were on the social and emotional well-being of our students. ACS will implement a Student/Faculty Care Team to focus on student and staff mental health and wellness using trauma informed models. ACS will employ a Mental Health Worker, full-time Attendance Officer, and Family Care Coordinator. School counselors will continue to provide support with small group counseling.



## Virtual Environment (Alexander City Virtual Academy - ACVA) GRADES 9 - 12 ONLY



- Information is Relayed via Digital Means
  - Digitally Posted Lessons and Assignments
  - Discussion Boards & Communication
  - Video Conferencing
  - Online Assessment Administered On-site
- Learning Can Be:
  - **Synchronous** - Real-Time, Peer-to-Peer Interaction in Same Setting and Same Time
  - **Asynchronous** - Self-Paced, Occurs at Independent Times and Locations

In grades 9-12, core and elective courses will be offered via ACCESS and Google Classroom, with many electives available beyond the required core, such as:

- Advanced placement;
- Dual enrollment;
- Foreign language; and
- Career tech.

The ACS Student & Parent Handbook and the Benjamin Russell High School Student Handbook policies and procedures will be in effect for Alexander City Virtual School students, including

- Attendance & behavior
- Academic integrity and dress code (when videoing with others); and
- The Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) for technology.

**Assessments will be required to be taken on-site at the virtual school or through and ACS secure digital platform.**

# Daily Procedures for all Alexander City Schools

---

- **Health and Safety**
  - ACS will encourage but not require vaccination for students and faculty.
  - Parents should check the health status of their student(s) daily.
  - Parents should seek medical attention and keep students at home if experiencing:
    - fever (temp. of 100.4 or above) or cough;
    - shortness of breath or sore throat; and
    - diarrhea or other COVID-19 related symptoms.
  - Parents should immediately report a confirmed COVID-19 diagnosis to the school nurse for guidance.
  - Facial masks are optional.
  - Alexander City Schools reserves the right to enforce facial PPE based on guidance from state and local health officials.
  - Students will be reminded to wash hands appropriately and use the sanitizing stations in each classroom and at various locations throughout the school.
  - For symptoms developed while in school, the nurse/school official will:
    - Immediately contact a parent /guardian;
    - Advise student to put on PPE (for prevention of spread)
    - Isolation of the student; and
    - Await pick-up.
- **Morning arrival, class transitions, and afternoon dismissal will follow local school procedures and protocols. Masks will be optional during these transitions and all efforts will be made to adhere to the 3 feet physical distancing protocol.**

## ADPH Back to School Toolkit

It is imperative that each family have a working number on file with the school and each day make arrangements for someone on the student contact list to be available if the parent is unable to pick-up their child in a timely manner.

# Alexander City Schools Operations Division

The Alexander City Schools Operations Division is comprised of the following departments:

- Food Services
- Transportation
- Maintenance
- Custodial/Janitorial Services
- Information Technology



The Operations Division provides an essential function to the overall well-being of our employees and students, and each department will fulfill duties to ensure the following:

- Facilities stay clean and sanitized;
- Students arrive safely to and from school;
- Students receive a nutritional breakfast and lunch each day; and
- Students are able to expand their learning through the power of technology.

## Food Services

- Breakfast and lunch may be served daily *in the classroom* for all students. Parents will be restricted from eating with their child for the first nine weeks. This process will be evaluated throughout the year and further information will follow.
- Parents are encouraged to pay for meals through My School Bucks.
- For safety purposes:
  - Parents will not be permitted to eat with students in classrooms for the first nine weeks.
  - Snacks and food items brought from home cannot be shared with classmates.
- Students may receive a Grab-n-Go meal for:
  - COVID-19 Quarantine for Classroom Exposure;
  - Temporary School Closure; or
  - Temporary District Shutdown.
- Each school will designate a time, location, and safety measures (PPE and social distancing) for parents to pick up the Grab and Go meals.

## Transportation

Buses are dedicated for daily transportation of students to and from school.

- ACS will continue to separate bus routes for elementary and secondary.
- All parents requiring bus transportation must register their child through PowerSchool and complete the Transportation Form linked on the Alexander City Schools district website.
- Parents are encouraged to conduct a health check to assure that students are *symptom-free* prior to boarding the bus.
- Self-check signage will be on the exterior of the bus during a.m. and p.m. routes for students.
- Hand sanitizer will be available on each bus as students enter and exit.
- All buses will be cleaned and sanitized daily.

## Bus Rider Requirements

- Bus Registration (with accurate address, ***working phone number***, and emergency contact info)
- Facial mask ***are optional***
- Assigned seating\*
- No eating allowed on the bus
- Face forward and no leaning across the aisle
- Must ride the assigned bus only

\*Family members or members of the same household will be seated together when appropriate.

***These requirements will be strictly enforced and violation may result in removal from the bus.***

## Maintenance Services

The Maintenance Department is dedicated to providing a safe environment for all students and employees by:

- Providing soap, paper, and sanitizing stations throughout each school;
- Focusing attention on maintenance requests in a timely manner; and

## Custodial/Janitorial Services

- All custodians will be trained in sanitation and cleanliness standards relating to COVID-19.
- Cleanliness checks will be conducted daily.
- Electrostatic sprayers will be used in each school for sanitation purposes on a bi-weekly basis (or when a deep cleaning of exposed classrooms/areas is reported).

## Information Technology (IT)

The IT team is dedicated to ensuring the provision of:

- Tools and programs that enhance teaching and learning in our 1:1 digital environment;
- Access to a Learning Management System (ie...Schoology, Google Classroom) for digital content when deemed applicable by the teacher; and
- Assigned devices for digital learning tasks.

## Device Expectations & Internet Access

- Only the assigned student should use the device.
- In the event that a Chromebook needs to be sanitized, a member of the IT department or trained staff will do so.
- Alexander City Schools has multiple options for Internet access. *If you do **not** have home Internet access*, please assure that your child's teacher is aware so that you can be informed of your options.

# Athletics & Extracurricular

---

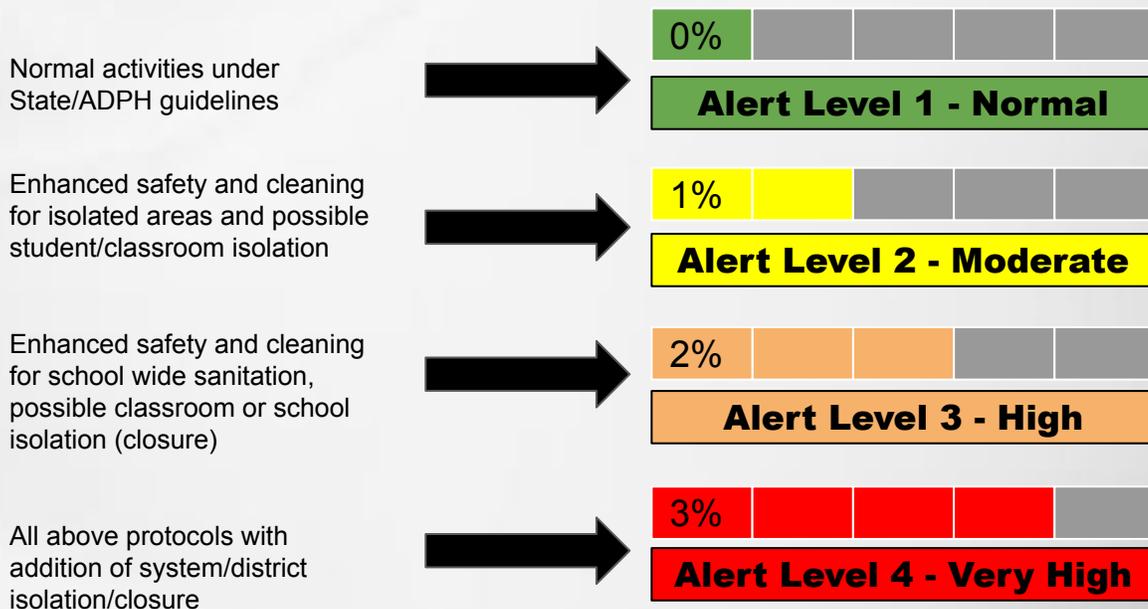
Alexander City Schools is implementing safe and healthy practices for all athletic and extracurricular activities.

- Each school will communicate plans for co- and extracurricular activities.
- Secondary schools will implement strategies adopted by the Alabama High School Athletic Association that will help provide a safer environment for student athletes.
- ACS reserves the right to limit capacity in all extra curricular activities.



**COVID-19 Data Dashboard** -The ACS Return-to-Learn plan will incorporate a COVID-19 Data Dashboard on the District’s website (insert link).

- The dashboard will list the number of cases for each school in reference to both teachers and students with positive test of COVID-19.
- Close contacts for both teachers and students will be added to our dashboard.
- Additionally, the dashboard will link the Tallapoosa County information from ADPH.
- The matrix will be developed to guide the decisions for classroom and school closures based on the percentage of positive cases at a given time.
- In consideration of the ALSDE Roadmap to Reopening Schools, the matrix will incorporate four “Alert Levels” (Normal, Moderate Risk, High Risk, and Very High Risk).
- We are awaiting confirmation from health officials for input.



# Individual School Plans

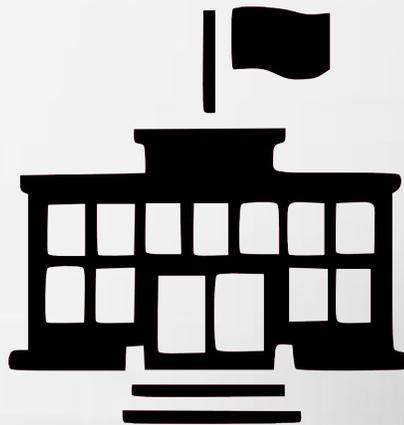
---

Each school will provide guidelines and procedures for parents and students to review by August 1, 2021. These plans will include arrival and dismissal procedures, check-out/check-in procedures, and other school driven protocols.

- **Jim Pearson Elementary** (available August 1)
- **Stephens Elementary** (available August 1)
- **Radney Elementary** (available August 1)
- **Alexander City Middle School** (available August 1)
- **Benjamin Russell High School** (available August 1)

## Attendance for students

- Attendance will be recorded for all students each day in virtual (9-12) and traditional classes.
- Please refer to the ACS Code of Conduct for accountability measures regarding required attendance.
- Parents are encouraged to provide written notice for all absences. (emails are acceptable.)
- COVID-19 related absences should be coded as such from physician's office.



# Need to Know

---

## General Info

- School will take place five days each week, Monday through Friday.
- In the event that COVID-19 protocols should have to be implemented, the need will be assessed *as applicable to the situation* for digital access to learning content by students.
- During a targeted closure, all contaminated areas will undergo an isolated disinfection process which will occur over a 24-hour period during which distance learning will take place for students.
- Students are encouraged to bring a water bottle to school everyday, as water fountains will be turned off on school campuses. Hydration stations are currently being considered at all levels.
- Any student who exhibits a fever will immediately be sent to the nurse for evaluation, and the parent or emergency contact may be notified immediately to pick up that child.
- Due to an intentional adherence to safety guidelines and protocols, guests will be limited within specific areas of all school buildings.
- Student desks will be strategically placed to accommodate physical distancing guidelines (3 feet) in the most reasonable manner.

## Check-In/Check-Out

- Parents are encouraged to make requests for a student check out at least 30 minutes in advance...For a 10:30 checkout, the front office should be notified by 10:00.
- Students will be accompanied to a predetermined location at their specific checkout time upon parent arrival at front office.
- We encourage parents not to check students out the last hour of the school day.
- Note that emergencies may affect the check-in/check-out process.

# Need to Know

---

## **Special Populations (Special Education, 504, ELL)**

- Students with individualized education such as IEPs, 504, I-ELPs, will have services provided in educational settings. Such individualized plans were crafted to provide the student with a free, appropriate public education in the traditional settings. For those students whose parents choose the virtual learning platform, a virtual learning plan will be crafted to address students' needs and services.

## **Assessments**

- All state mandated assessments and benchmark assessments will be required to be taken in a face-to-face setting.



# Credits & Resources:

---

[Alabama State Department of Education](#)

[Google Workspace for Education Plus](#)

[ACS Journey Forward Student/Parent/Teacher Help Desk](#)

[ACS Tools/Platforms Information](#)

