

Parent's Guide to Alabama's Roadmap to Reopening Schools

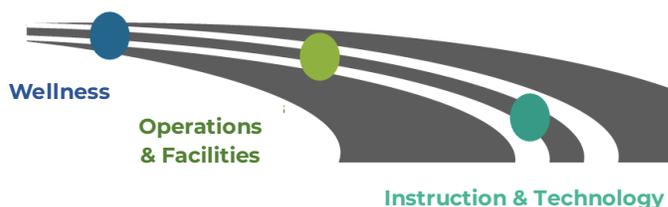
In looking forward to the 2020-2021 school year, we know many challenges lie ahead, but it is the intention of the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) that all schools reopen this fall under the following guiding principles.

Guiding Principles

Five principles should guide all planning, decision making, and execution of plans to return to school in the 2020-2021 school year.

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.

The Alabama Roadmap encompasses three focus areas and assists systems in navigating the status of campus availability with guidance for now and when students are back on campus.



Q Are the ALSDE recommendations mandatory?

ALSDE recognizes that all recommended guidance will not be possible in all settings and should be amended based on the needs of each school system and school as appropriate.



Q Will campuses reopen for in-person instruction?

Yes, the expectation is for Alabama campuses to reopen for traditional learning this fall.

Q Who will determine if my local campus stays open?

Local Boards of Education, upon the recommendation of their superintendents and in consultation with the Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH) and/or local public health officials, will make determinations about specific changes in campus status throughout the year.

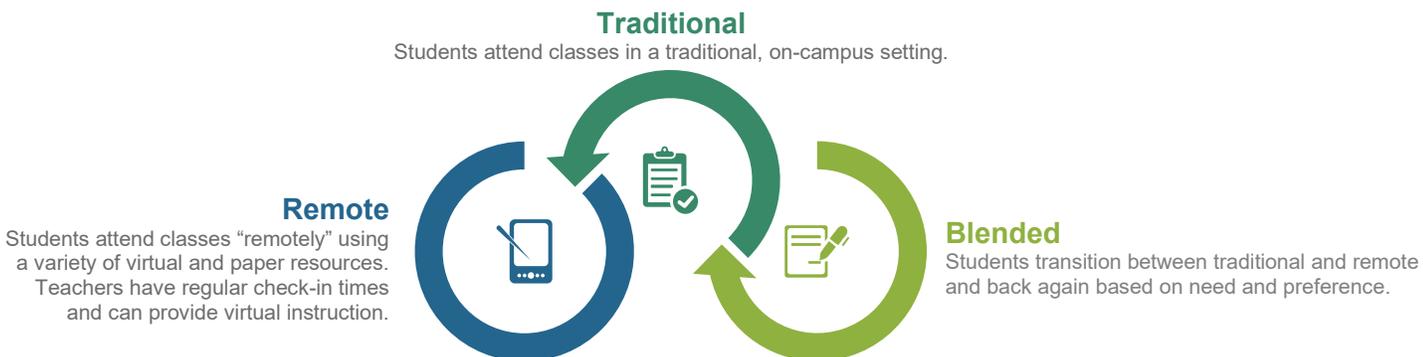
Q What are some things that might be different on campuses?

Local school systems set day-to-day policies and procedures. Communications around when and if facial coverings should be worn, for example, will come directly from your local school system. Students may expect to see changes in physical distancing, increased sanitization, and personal hygiene on while on campuses.

Q What kind of precautions will schools have to take?

A portion of the essential guidance will require enhanced cleaning and sanitization and that all schools designate an area of quarantine for students who become ill at school.

Q What remote learning opportunities might be available?



In Alabama’s model, local school systems are responsible for developing and implementing policies and procedures around each of these three instructional scenarios. The State has committed to offer remote learning resources through a third-party curriculum developer as well as to expand the high school ACCESS program to all school systems. It is the recommendation of ALSDE that all school systems provide access to both traditional and remote options throughout the 2020-2021 school year. Further details about how remote learning will be improved can be found in the full Roadmap.

Q What if I do not have Internet at home?

Local school systems are continuing to inventory Internet accessibility for students. The results of this inventory can provide insights on how students can have internet connectivity throughout the state. ALSDE and school systems are diligently advocating for Internet connectivity for all students.

Q What can I do to help?

HOME is the first point on the screening continuum. School systems should educate and support families on identifying the symptoms that indicate staff and students must stay at home. Families should be encouraged to self-report symptoms of illness, which could include fever, new onset of cough, etc. Self-reporting mechanisms could include calling the school or calling your health-care provider.

Q What is being done to close the digital divide for Alabama’s students?

ALSDE continues to work with state leaders to secure funding and additional opportunities for expansion of broadband infrastructure. Many school systems have already invested in innovative tactics to close the digital divide by purchasing devices. ALSDE has provided best practices as examples to school systems, distributed funds, and is providing a remote/digital curriculum to all school systems.

Q Will extracurricular activities be allowed?

Yes, we will continue to work with school systems to provide best practices for off-campus field trips, etc. We also continue to share the Alabama High School Athletic Association’s guidance for sports.

Knowing a challenging school year lies ahead, we want to take this opportunity to say thank you ahead of time. Together we all achieve more, and together we will keep our students safe and push forward!