ATTACHMENT #1
page 1 of 3

Arkansas Arts Academy School Board Minutes
Tuesday, August 10th, 2021 at 6:30 pm
High School Commons

Item		Description	Motion	Video Reference	Action
1	Nate Fries	Call to Order at 6:31 pm		6:07 - 6:27	☑
2	Nate Fries	Establish Quorum / Roll Call: Nate Fries, Jeff Hunnicutt, Adrianne McGinnis, Leslee Post, Cara Riley and Maurissa Roberts		6:30 - 6:40	☑
3	Nate Fries	Pledge of Allegiance		6:41 - 6:55	☑
4	Nate Fries	Comments from the Public:			☑
4A		Maurissa Culbreath, Teacher: Discussed stability information shared last year and change in staffing.		8:03 - 10:35	
4B		Laura Maxwell	No Show	10:50 - 11:10	
4C		Danelle Wilson, Parent: Discussed personal rights to choose to wear a mask or to choose not to wear a mask.		11:20 - 13:16	
4D		Haylee Zebley, Parent: Thankful for the proactive response by our Board for a mask mandate.		13:45 - 15:08	
4E		Katie Templeton, parent: Spoke in support of masks		15:10 - 15:33	
4F		Roddy Little, President of Student Council: Spoke about the proposed Dress Code policy change, Cell Phone proposed policy change, Concern about Parents parking on the street.		15:33 - 23:20	
4G		Jackie Avery:	No Show	23:30	
4H		Mandy Melick, parent: Discussed proposed Dress Code policy.		24:05 - 30:54	
5	Nate Fries	Consent Agenda: Approve Minutes, Financials and the Enrollment Report. Attachments 1, 2, and 3.		31:15 - 34:07	
		Discussion of Finance Committee Meeting with New Members, Enrollment Report.			
		A motion was made to accept the Consent Agenda.	1st Jeff Hunnicutt 2nd Cara Riley		Vote 7 - 0
6	Nate Fries	New Business			
6A		Discuss and Vote on School Board Vacancy: 7 people expressed interest in joining the Board. Board Discussed Emily Kaiser and Ken Parks.			
		A motion was made to nominate Emily Kaiser for the open School Board Seat.	1st Leslee Post 2nd Maurissa Roberts		Vote 7 - 0

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6B		Infant, Child Care Policy - Attachment #4 The Board discussed room availability, Liability in Covid Environment, what options are available. Equity Labor Laws about safety and wellbeing.			
		A motion was made to remove our current policy on the Infant, Child Care Policy.	1st Jeff Hunnicutt 2nd Cara Riley		Vote 7 - 0
6C		New Position: Testing Data Coordinator - Attachment #5			
		A motion was made to approve the New Testing Data Coordinator Position to be filled by Heather Davis	1st Leslee Post 2nd Jeff Hunnicutt		Vote 7 - 0
6D		Athletic Director Position - Attachment #6 The Board discussed voting to make official David Skelton be appointed AAA Athletic Director.			
		A motion was made to approve David Skelton as AAA Athletic Director.	1st Cara Riley 2nd Leslee Post		Vote 7 - 0
6E		Sports Policy - Attachment #7			
		The Board discussed the proposed Sports Policy presented by David Skelton			
		A motion was made to approve the Sports Policy as presented and reviewing appropriate grade point average.	1st Adrianne McGinnis 2nd Cara Riley	1:01:25 - 1:07:30	Vote 7 - 0
6F		High School Handbook - Attachment #8			
		The Board discussed the proposed High School Student Handbook,			
		A motion was made to form a committee to review proposed High School Handbook.	1st Jeff Hunnicutt 2nd Cara Riley	1:08:00 - 1:42:48	Vote 7 - 0
6G		Approve COVID Employee Incentive			
		The Board discussed the proposed COVID Incentive of $200, discussed it was not a required vacine but an incentivized.			
		A motion was made to approve the $200 Incentive for employee that have been vacinated against COVID	1st Cara Riley 2nd Maurissa Roberts	1:43:16 - 1:46:12	Vote 7 - 0
		Dr. Roberts discussed the			
7	Nate Fries	Discussions of items since publication of the agenda			

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8	Nate Fries	Executive Session -	None		
		A. Personnel			
		B. Confidential Matters			
9	Nate Fries	Adjournment at 9:25 pm	1st Cara Riley 2nd Maurissa Roberts		
	Video Link	https://core-docs.s3.amazonaws.com/documents/asset/uploaded_file/1510594/AAA-Special_Board_Meeting_Video-8-27-2021.mp4			

Nate Fries / Secretary Treasurer

Date 9/14/21

ARKANSAS
ARTS ACADEMY
Aspire. Achieve. Advance.

Arkansas Arts Academy School Board Agenda
Tuesday, August 10th, 2021 at 6:30 pm
High School Commons

1. Call to order – Fries	Action
2. Establish quorum / Roll Call – Fries	
3. Pledge of Allegiance – Fries	
4. School Board Elections - Fries	
5. Comments from the Public:	
6. Consent Agenda – Fries	Approval
A. Approve minutes from July Regular – Attachment #1	
B. July Financials – Attachment #2	
C. Enrollment Report – Enrollment Attachment #3	
7. New Business:	Approval
A. Discuss and Vote on School Board Vacancy	
B. Infant, Child Care Policy – Attachment #4	
C. New Positions: Testing Data Coordinator – Attachment #5	
D. Athletic Director Position – Attachment #6	
E. Sports Policy – Attachment # 7	
F. High School Handbook – Attachment #8	
G. Approve COVID Employee Incentive	
8. Discussion of item since publication of Agenda	
9. Executive Session	Closed
A. Personnel Discussion	
10. Adjournment	Adjourn

Arkansas Arts Academy
School Board Visitor
Sign in Sheet

All attendees are welcome to speak and will be limited to 3 (three) minutes each. Thank you

Date August 10, 2021

NAME	REASON (OBSERVING/~~SPEAKING~~)
Kendra McGaugh	Observing
Sabrina Garcia	Observing
Mary Leach	Observing
Danielle Wilson	speaking
Maryanne Stewart	Observing
Joseph Stewart	Observing
Michelle Belden	Observing
Valentine Belden	Observation
Bob Berg	Observing
Mandy Melick	~~O~~ Speaking
Whitney Melick	Observing
Kaitlyn Melick	~~Observing~~ Speaking
Amy Gillespie	Observing

stration Report					
rt Generated:	8/9/2021 17:53				
	Webinar ID	Scheduled Time	Duration (minutes)	# Registered	
Monthly School Board Meeting Webinar	811 6680 1827	8/10/2021 18:30	60	5	
ndee Details					
Name	Last Name	Email	Registration Time	Will you be wanting to make a public comment during the Public Comment time frame? (3 minutes max)	If you are making a public comment - please describe the topic on which you wish to speak (Enter None if not speaking)
ssa	Culbreath	marissadedner@gmail.com	8/6/2021 8:07	Yes	Current Leadership concerns
a	Maxwell	Maxwell907@yahoo.com	8/9/2021 11:52	Yes	Request for no MANDATORY mask for AAA until state requirement.
elle	Wilson	Darnelle8907@gmail.com	8/9/2021 13:14	Yes	Mask mandate
ee	Zebley	Haylee.Alsdorf@gmail.com	8/9/2021 16:44	Yes	Mask mandate
	Templeton	Kemcnabb1@gmail.com	8/9/2021 16:48	Yes	Thanking the board for voting to require masks and encouraging them to maintain that stance.
y	Little	littler@artsk12.org	8/10/2021 18:09	Yes	The student body thoughts on the new school Policies.

2021/22 PROJECTION

	ACTUAL Period 1 JUL	ACTUAL Period 4 AUG	ACTUAL Period 1 SEPT	ACTUAL Period 4 OCT	ACTUAL Period 5 NOV	ACTUAL Period 6 DEC	ACTUAL Period 7 JAN	ACTUAL Period 8 FEB	ACTUAL Period 9 MAR	ACTUAL Period 10 APR	ACTUAL Period 11 MAY	ACTUAL Period 12 JUN
eginning Balance	592,209.24	1,031,585.20	1,065,544.37	1,078,137.77	1,093,450.17	1,096,472.57	1,120,989.97	1,177,285.37	1,195,332.77	1,224,405.17	1,209,820.57	1,257,442.97
evenue	768,508.31	824,091.47	819,375.70	793,276.70	776,879.70	806,799.70	857,659.70	776,879.70	822,879.70	776,779.70	816,779.70	776,786.79
xpenditures	329,132.35	790,132.30	806,782.30	777,964.30	773,857.30	782,282.30	801,364.30	758,832.30	793,807.30	791,364.30	769,157.30	1,449,514.33
nding Balance	1,031,585.20	1,065,544.37	1,078,137.77	1,093,450.17	1,096,472.57	1,120,989.97	1,177,285.37	1,195,332.77	1,224,405.17	1,209,820.57	1,257,442.97	584,715.43

ease note that July does not have a full amount of salaries and benefits since teachers contract pay
egins in August

ATTACHMENT #2

Attachment # 3

Arkansas Arts Academy
Enrollment Report
August 4th, 2021

Elementary School	8/4/2021 Enrollment	February Lottery Enrollment	Difference	Current 21-22 Wait List
Kindergarten	80	80	0	108
1st	80	80	0	69
2nd	80	80	0	53
3rd	80	80	0	61
4th	82 *	84	-2	40
5th	83 *	84	-1	51
6th	81 *	84	-3	64
Total	566	572	-6	446
Middle/High School				
7th	109 *	110	-1	33
8th	110	110	0	49
9th	109 *	110	-1	35
10th	107 *	110	-3	17
11th	104 *	115	-11	26
12th	85	85	0	0
Total MS & HS	624	640	-16	160
Total Enrollment	1190	1212	-22	609
* Offers for enrollment have been extended, waiting to hear back from parents.				

Attachment # 4

- Matt Young: Elementary Open House for K – 6th grades will be August 1st from 4 – 6 pm. Our PTA is hosting a Kindergarten Picnic July 29th from 5:30 – 7:30 pm, which offers our incoming Kindergarten students and parents an opportunity to meet. There are many camps going on this summer, Art Camp, Steam, Computer Science, Lego Camp and Dance camp at the high school. A local physician has offered to give sports physicals for our students on July 29th at the K-6 campus. We are working on many work orders at our K-6 campus.
- Teacher Child Care Policy:
  Heather Wright is requesting permission to offer staff infant childcare from 6 weeks to 6 months of age. They are considering hiring a nanny to work in the ISS room paid for by staff. Our insurance package already has coverage for this situation. A motion was made by Asele Mack to allow a child care room at the high school, a second Dave Russell and the motion carried with 6 – 0 vote.
- Advanced Ed or Arts School Network:
  Mary Ley proposed that we move our membership from Advanced Education ($3,500 per year) to Art School Network ($750 per year). Mary stated that our relationship with The Art School Network would provide better exposure for our schools. A motion was made by Tony Beardsley and a second by Cara Riley and the motion was carried in a 6 – 0 vote.
- July 15th reading of Capitol Campaign Study will be held at Mary Ley's home.
- Dance / Archery Studio at EMS Campus:
  Mary Ley is proposing that we use the remaining funds from our high school construction project to erect a metal building to accommodate a much needed larger dance studio and archery gym. Mary is working with Height Jackson, the City of Rogers and Brenda at NWA Buildings. Mary is currently collecting bids.
- Howard Alsdorf ask for an updated School Board Professional Development hours' update.

7. Discussion of items since publication of the agenda

- Handbook:
  Jamie Dale has cleaned up our student handbook and moved some items so it flows better. Some items have been added such as drop off and pick up procedures, bus routes and rules, campus address and contact information. A vote was tabled to August 2019 meeting.

Arkansas Arts Academy

Assessment and Data Coordinator

2021-2022

JOB DESCRIPTION:

The Assessment and Data Coordinator performs a variety of professional, technical, and administrative tasks in order to direct the administration of state testing within the K-12 Arkansas Arts Academy. The testing coordinator is responsible for coordinating and supervising the district-wide implementation of state and testing programs, serving as the school testing coordinator prior to each assessment, assists school staff with preparation for test administrations and provides test results and consultation regarding the interpretation of test results in order to improve student achievement to K-12 teachers within Professional Learning Communities (PLC) throughout the school year. The coordinator will work directly with teachers to identify learning gaps and work to increase integrated curriculum development. The coordinator will facilitate data analysis, coach/mentor PLC teams, assist teachers with the identification of priority standards and help create individualized differentiated instruction using formative assessment ideas and modeling teaching.

JOB GOAL:

- To plan, develop, and coordinate research, analysis, measurement, and reporting data and other critical information for testing and programs in order to provide high quality, well-focused support for the highest academic achievement priorities set by the district for school campuses.
- Provides service as accountability partner to principals; accurate reporting of all student data; and provides program evaluation as assigned.
- Applies an advanced understanding of state laws, rules, policies and procedures in the specialized area of state assessments in order to organize, manage and execute assessments.
- Performs detailed study and analysis of confidential student assessment data in the form of specialized reports, records, charts and graphs.
- Works in collaboration with the Arkansas Arts Academy Student Services Director to align and manage K-12 student individual education plan (IEP) and 501 modifications for state and grade level assessments.
- Act as the liaison and communicate with other educational institutions, governmental agencies regarding performance data and assessments.
- Help identify students needing Level 3 Coordinated Support and Level 4 Directed Support for Reading based on the ACT Aspire Summative for Reading, and assist with the district literacy support plan.
- Develop and present information at the request of the CEO to the school board, parents and school personnel.
- Develop, schedule and train school personnel on the delivery and analysis of assessment data, including trends and identifying areas for growth.

- Assist teachers in the development of assessment aligned state standard curriculum implementation through coaching PLC teams.
- Leads the effort to provide an aligned and articulated instructional assessment, accountability, and data analysis program for the District.
- Produces monthly reports on PLC progress and agendas to the CEO.
- Fosters a positive work environment that promotes collaboration, celebration, creativity, and high quality productivity.

Athletic Director Job Description:

JOB SUMMARY To provide information, resources, training, and support for effective strategies and technologies for the quality education of student athletes.

ESSENTIAL JOB FUNCTIONS:

- Works with the schools to develop a District-wide athletic program to ensure uniformity and coordination.
- Develops athletic policies with input from principal, athletic directors, and coaches.
- Develops a District-wide athletic program policy and guidebook and updates annually. Provides athletic assistance and guidance to schools in interpretation of Board policy and the Arkansas Activities Association rules.
- Assists in the evaluation and selection of athletic equipment.
- Serves as a consultant within the District on all athletic construction projects.
- Monitors the District athletic program for compliance with gender equity.
- Demonstrates knowledge and understanding of athletic administration as it relates to secondary schools.
- Serves as the District liaison for athletics to the Arkansas Activities Association..
- Coordinates the provisions for physical examinations for all athletes with local community agencies and organizations..
- Conducts periodic athletic director meetings for the purpose of program planning and coordination.
- Assists the schools to promote publicity for all interscholastic sports, such as sports brochures and other publications, press releases and radio releases, etc.
- Fosters good community relationships by keeping the community aware of and responsive to the athletic programs.
- Maintains a close working relationship with District and school personnel to ensure information exchange, coordination, and support for the decision-making process and the collection of feedback concerning services.
- Responds to inquiries or concerns in a timely manner.
- Keeps the Superintendent/CEO informed about potential problems or unusual events.
- Attends all local, district, regional, state, and national meetings that are necessary to the functioning of the athletic program.
- Promotes professional growth and enrichment by encouraging athletic coaches to be members of professional athletic organizations and to participate in approved clinics, conferences, and required compliance seminars. .
- Assists coaches in keeping abreast of current practices, programs, legal issues, and care and prevention of athletic injuries.
- Keeps well-informed about current trends and best practices in content, service, or project areas.
- Sets high standards and expectations for self and others.
- Assists in developing and implementing the District athletic budget.

- Coordinates the purchase of athletic equipment.
- Coordinates the establishment of admission prices for all athletic events.
- Seeks assistance and support for the financing of the athletic program.
- Assists in maintaining appropriate coordination among the various programs related to athletic services.
- Prepares and submits required reports and maintains appropriate records.
- Assists in developing and implementing the department budget.
- Supports the goals and priorities of the District.
- Represents the District in a positive and professional manner.
- Performs other incidental tasks consistent with the goals and objectives of this position. Encourages the school to provide athletic opportunities to all students.
- Help coaches with annual athletic program goals and objectives.
- Implements an annual evaluation of the athletic program.
- Performs other duties as assigned.

MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS Bachelor Degree with Experience in Administration and Supervision preferred. Qualifications may vary from the above requirements to such a degree as the Superintendent and Board determine is necessary and appropriate to ensure properly qualified personnel in each specialized assignment.

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, AND ABILITIES Knowledge of assigned content or service area. Ability to express facts and ideas clearly and concisely, both orally and in writing. Ability to organize time and materials. Ability to prioritize tasks and responsibilities. Knowledge of state and District curriculum and assessment priorities and related statutes, rules, and policies. Knowledge of child growth and development, learning theory, and current best practices. Ability to use computer hardware and software to accomplish instructional and administrative functions. Ability to interact effectively with professional staff, parents, and students.

PHYSICAL DEMANDS Light Work: Exerting up to 20 pounds of force occasionally and/or up to 10 pounds of force as frequently as needed to move objects.

WORKING CONDITIONS Employees in this position work in a safe and secure work environment that may period

Arkansas Arts Academy Sports Policy
(presented for consideration)

New Sport Request Process

To request a new interscholastic/extracurricular sport at the Arkansas Arts Academy for possible consideration adherence to the formal process must be met. Adherence to all rules and regulations within the Arkansas Athletics Association (AAA) is required.

Step 1:

Present a written request to the Arkansas Arts Academy Athletic Director. The request MUST include:

- description of the sport and identification of the need
- defined calendar year season or dates students will participate
- number of games/matches
- state association or local league
- anticipated amount of out of class time
- travel radius for all practices, games, tournaments and/or playoffs
- number of anticipated players
- proposed coach with verification of background check clearance
- player try-out information including how it will advertised, monitored, evaluated and timeline for team rosters
- practice times
- facility needed with estimate of costs
- level of competition (JV, Varsity, etc.)
- how funds will be generated and utilized
- estimated cost of sport and amount each player will pay
- the plan for student sponsorship if needed

- what type of transportation/driver is required including funding source
- if physicals are required; if so when and how will they be offered
- how will grades/missing assignments be monitored, how will probations be delivered, what constitutes removal from the team
- how liability release forms will be collected
- if any volunteers be used
- Is this a school sponsored sport (i.e. Arts Academy identified)
- how sportsmanship be modeled and maintained by all players, coaches and parents

Step 2:

The AD will evaluate the proposal. If all items are not addressed adequately, the proposal will be returned.

Activities will NOT be considered if:

- They are unsafe and not appropriate for high school and junior high such as boxing
- They do not have a wide appeal or there is no opportunity for competition such as dodgeball
- They are cost prohibitive or there are no facilities available such as equestrian
- They interfere with the mission of our school
- Students will miss more than ____ hours of school instruction
- They are deemed inequitable
- They do not meet Title IX

Step 3:

If the proposal meets all expectations, the AD will share with district personnel/Superintendent/CEO for approval.

Step 4:

If approved by the Superintendent/CEO they will present the proposal on behalf of the submitting individual/s to the Arkansas Arts Academy Board of Directors at the next available Board meeting.

Elements that will be considered when adding a new sport:

Supervision

All practices and games will be continually supervised by the coach.

All events must be supervised by an administrator. This supervision will include monitoring the behavior and safety of the coaches, participants, and spectators. An important rationale for interscholastic athletics is to promote school spirit, including student participation and attendance at after-school or evening activities. Sports should provide students with outlets and opportunities to support their peers in spirited competition with rival schools.

Parents, coaches, players, fans, etc. that behave in a way that is inappropriate will be asked to leave the premises.

If coaches demonstrate any inappropriate behaviour, language, actions they will be removed immediately and the sport will be in jeopardy of cancellation.

Coaching

Coaches will be trained in safety protocols such as hydrations, concussion protocol, CPR and AED, Heat Related Illness, first aid, fundamentals of coaching, and other PD specific to the sport.

Coaches will complete all required training and a background check in a timely manner and submit PD completion to the AD.

Coaches will train players to practice proper techniques in regards to playing their sport with safety in mind. Adequate practice time is an important safety concern, especially for certain sports where proper technique is essential to the safety of participants.

Ideally, coaching positions will be filled by teachers. If a qualified coach is not available then the sport may be denied.

Expenses

Expenses must be appropriate to the sport and comparable to other public schools.

Full funding of a new sport could include:
Transportation and driver/s
First aid materials
Uniforms
Referees

Equipment
Facility costs (custodial, maintenance)
End of year banquets and celebrations
And other personal costs for students such as mouth guards, practice clothes, shoes, and personal preferences such as braces or sleeves, etc.
Travel meals

Funding
Business Sponsors
Player fees (no player will be denied participation based on an inability to contribute financially)
Admission to events
Donations
Approved fundraisers

-Fundraisers must not conflict with any school sanctioned fundraiser to support the school or its mission

-All fundraisers must follow Child Nutrition rules and regulations and be approved by the site administrator.

* Finances will be handled by the Booster Club with monthly financial reports provided to the AD and available to the Board of Directors upon request.

Schedules
Games and competitions will be developed by the coach and submitted and approved by the AD. These schedules will be shared in a timely manner

with staff and board. Schedules will also be shared on the website and on social media.

The proposal will be evaluated as follows :

The initial request will be submitted to the Athletic Director. The request will be reviewed based on the above criteria. The AD may seek further details or explanations. If the initial proposal is denied, the proposal will be returned with an explanation for the denial. If deemed appropriate for further consideration, the proposal will be forwarded to the Superintendent. If approved at the Superintendent level, the request will be forwarded for review by the board.

2021-2022 COVID-19 Guidance for Schools
August 10, 2021

Despite hardships for the 2020-21 school year, Arkansas's students, educators, and communities finished the year strong and were successful at maximizing on-site instruction in Arkansas even when many other states remained virtual. The success came as a result of strategic planning and ongoing communication between school districts, the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), and the Arkansas Department of Health (ADH). Last summer, school districts, in collaboration with their communities, developed and implemented "Ready for Learning" plans that put into action multiple mitigation strategies to minimize risks to students and staff. These plans served as each LEAs Safe Return to In-Person learning, and the results from last year leave us more confident in the proven mitigation strategies and more aware of what to expect.

Last spring, during the period of the American Rescue Plan (ARP) ESSER award, schools were required to update their Safe Return to In-Person Instruction procedures to describe plans for Continuity of Services for the remainder of the school year and during the summer. Plans were required to be posted by April 15, 2021, on school district websites. These plans must be reviewed regularly, but no less frequently than every six months, and be revised when appropriate. While the next regularly-scheduled update is October 15, 2021, school districts should re-engage their communities to review plans and make updates to reflect the district's strategies for a Safe Return and Continuity of Service for the upcoming school year. Updates should be posted on each school district's website.

To assist schools with developing procedures for all school operations, including remaining summer activities, DESE is updating guidance regarding the best practices that will continue to ensure the safety of both students and educators while supporting a strong in-person learning environment.

Because many schools serve children under the age of 12 who are not eligible for vaccination at this time or are not yet fully vaccinated, this guidance emphasizes implementing layered prevention strategies to protect people who are not fully vaccinated, including students, teachers, staff, and other members of their households, especially in areas where community transmission is elevated. School districts are advised to continue practicing preventative measures such as appropriate masking, physical distancing, screening, testing, ventilation, handwashing and respiratory etiquette, staying home when sick and getting tested, contact tracing in combination with quarantine and isolation, and cleaning and disinfection to the extent practical. School districts have access to additional federal funding that is specifically designed

to ***prevent, prepare for, and respond*** to COVID-19 and are encouraged to monitor planned uses of funds to ensure that sufficient PPE and other safety measures are considered when expending funds.

Continued Practices to Mitigate the Likelihood of COVID-19 Spread Inside the School

Vaccinations

COVID-19 vaccines are the most effective strategy to protect people from getting sick and to reduce the risk of people spreading COVID-19. Students who are ages 12 and older are eligible to receive the Pfizer vaccination. Schools are encouraged to help students ages 12 and older, their families, and all school staff with getting vaccinated. Actions districts can take include:

- initiating vaccination campaigns,
- hosting informational sessions with local medical professionals,
- partnering with local community-based programs, including childcare facilities, and
- sponsoring vaccination clinics at local school sites.

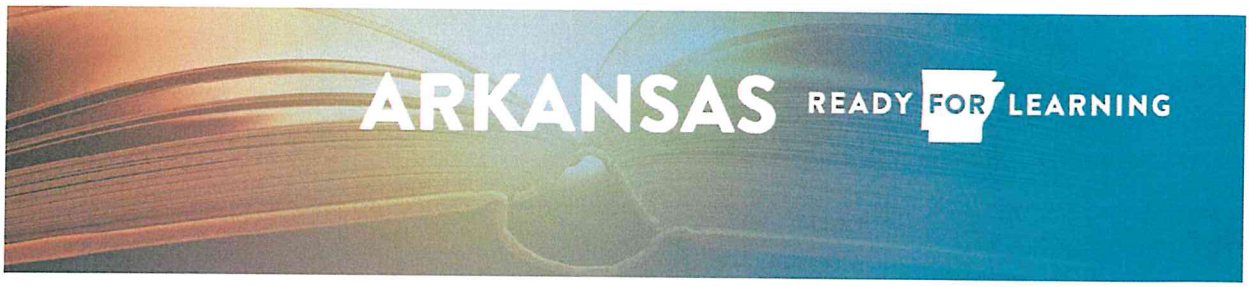
Fully-vaccinated students or staff do not need to quarantine if deemed close contacts, unless they have/develop symptoms. School nurses can help verify the vaccination status of a potential close contact through WebIZ to help POCs and school officials determine responses. Parents and students should not be required to provide documentation of vaccination status if nurses are unable to verify through WebIZ.

Masks/Face Coverings

As updated on August 4, 2021, CDC guidance states, "When teachers, staff, and students consistently and correctly wear a mask, they protect others as well as themselves. Consistent and correct mask use is especially important indoors and in crowded settings, when physical distancing cannot be maintained." The CDC currently recommends the following regarding the wearing of masks in school settings:

- **Indoors.** CDC recommends indoor masking for all individuals age 2 years and older, including students, teachers, staff, and visitors, regardless of vaccination status.

- **Outdoors.** In general, people do not need to wear masks when outdoors. CDC recommends that people who are not fully vaccinated wear a mask in crowded outdoor settings or during activities that involve sustained close contact with other people. Fully vaccinated people might choose to wear a mask in crowded outdoor settings if they or someone in their household is immunocompromised.



Individuals exposed to a confirmed case of COVID-19 will not need to quarantine if the individual exposed has no symptoms and both the infected and exposed individual consistently and correctly were wearing a mask.

NOTE: On August 6, 2021, Judge Tim Fox issued a temporary restraining order that prohibits the enforcement of Act 1002 of 2021 pending continuing court proceedings. Under the order, there can be no enforcement action taken against any school district or charter school that adopts or implements a requirement to use masks/face coverings. It is recommended that districts and charter schools consult district legal counsel when considering the adoption or implementation of mask/face covering requirements and the applicability of current local policies.

Physical Distancing

In order to facilitate in-person learning 5 days a week for Arkansas students, each district should **continue** to implement practices that promote physical distancing between individuals and groups of individuals. Although 6 feet is the standard, the inability or impracticality to have physical distance does not prevent a school from having in-person learning. Based on studies from the 2020-2021 school year, the CDC recommends schools maintain:

- at least 3 feet of physical distance between students within classrooms, and
- at least 6 feet between students and adults, and between adults who are not fully vaccinated.

It is suggested that both of these recommendations be combined with indoor mask wearing by all individuals in a school setting to reduce transmission risk.

Hand Washing/Cleaning

Schools should continue to have hand sanitizer and/or hand washing stations with soap and water at entrances. They should also attempt to provide hand sanitizer and/or hand washing stations with soap and water in every classroom. Students, teachers, staff, and campus visitors should be encouraged to sanitize and/or wash hands frequently.

Ventilation/Air Circulation

Evidence suggests that improved air circulation is beneficial in reducing the spread of COVID-19. Whenever possible, schools should open windows or otherwise work to improve air flow by allowing outside air to circulate in the building, and thereby lower the concentration of viral particles. The CDC has provided guidance on increasing ventilation to prevent COVID-19 spread. ESSER funds can be utilized to upgrade ventilation or purchase devices for classrooms that help with ventilation and air quality.

Screening

Districts should continue to screen individuals who enter facilities. Districts are still encouraged to continue following their screening plan for each campus and event using screening questions approved by the ADH. The value of screening is that it keeps students and staff with symptoms out of school and limits exposure. Screening usually consists of making sure a person doesn't have a fever, as well as having him or her answer questions about symptoms and exposures. For example, some asked screening questions and used thermometers to check the temperature of all upon entry, while others had parents do the screenings at home. We recommend using whichever screening method districts prefer as long as it is effective at ensuring individuals with symptoms of COVID-19, and those needing to be excluded, do not enter the facility.

Food Service and School Meals

Given the very low risk of transmission from surfaces and shared objects, there is no need to limit food service approaches to single use items and packaged meals. Schools should still establish procedures that maximize physical distance as much as possible when students are moving through the food service line and while eating (especially indoors). Using additional spaces outside of the cafeteria for mealtime seating, such as classrooms, the gymnasium, or outdoor seating, can help facilitate distance.

Busing

While on buses, open or crack windows if doing so does not pose a safety risk. Keeping windows open, even a few inches, improves air circulation. ADH and ADE also recommend maintaining as much physical distance as possible between riders on the bus. In addition, keeping siblings/household members seated together is also a helpful strategy. Masks are recommended due to the close nature of a bus environment.

School-Related Activities

Districts should be mindful of activities associated with regular school operations that could create a higher risk for COVID-19 transmission and review ADH guidance for specific activity or event protocols. These may include, but are not limited to:

- Vocal and Instrumental music programs
- Theater Performances
- Athletic programs and activities
- Back to school orientation and registrations
- School dances
- Club events or co-curricular activities

Schools are encouraged to consider guidance for each event and to follow established guidelines and communicate to students and families procedures that promote safety and continuity of operations. Various school-related guidelines can be accessed at COVID-19 Arkansas Department of Health.

- Large Outdoor Venues
- Large Indoor Venues
- Community and School Sponsored Team Sports
- Community and School Sponsored Music and Theater Events

Responding to Positive COVID-19 Cases in a School

Point of Contact and Reporting of Positive Cases

To promote the continuation of last year's successful communication strategy, all districts will continue to identify a Point of Contact (POC) who will initiate the contact tracing process when positive cases are reported at school and notify the ADH of positive cases as they occur. Superintendents will be sent a link to register the district POC.

If an individual who has been in a school has tested positive for COVID-19, districts are still required to continue to follow the established ADH reporting processes and requirements for isolation and quarantine. There are some conditions that could exempt an exposed individual / close contact to the quarantine/isolation requirements that are discussed below. School nurses can help verify the status of a potential close contact to help POCs and school officials determine responses.

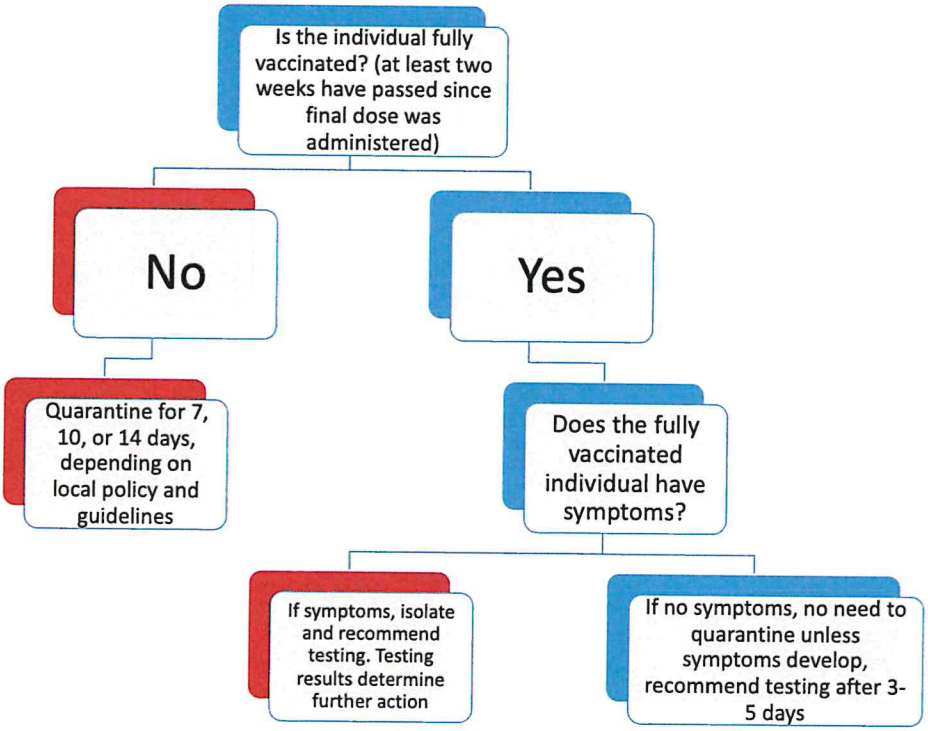
Close Contact Determination and Responses

The CDC defines a close contact as an individual confirmed to have been within six feet for 15 cumulative minutes or longer within a 24-hour period during the infectious period of a person who has tested positive for COVID-19.

1. Individuals who have previously tested positive for COVID-19 and recovered and who are subsequently exposed to someone with COVID-19 within three months of their original diagnosis do not have to stay at home or get tested again, as long as they do not develop new symptoms. Individuals who develop symptoms again within three months of their first instance of COVID-19 should see their physician as they may need to be tested again if there is no other cause identified for their symptoms.

2. Individuals exposed to a confirmed case of COVID-19 will not need to be quarantined **if they have no symptoms and both the infected and exposed individual consistently and correctly were wearing a mask**.

3. Individuals who are fully vaccinated may not have to quarantine. To help determine whether a **fully vaccinated individual** should quarantine, refer to the following chart:



School officials should review with POCs the local process for identifying close contacts and the process for communicating with parents, staff, and students whether an individual will need to stay home and/or be tested.

Quarantine of those exposed to someone with COVID-19

As of December 2, 2020, the CDC amended its guidance to allow two shorter options for the quarantine period. Based on current CDC guidance, the quarantine period can end for individuals experiencing no symptoms according to the following guidelines:

1. After 10 full 24-hour periods since close contact exposure without testing, or
2. After seven full 24-hour periods since close contact exposure and after receiving a negative test result (sample taken no earlier than five 24-hour periods after exposure).

If individuals return to school from these shorter quarantine windows, they should regularly monitor themselves for symptoms to ensure they remain symptom-free and take appropriate precautions (e.g., consistent mask usage) for the duration of the 14-day incubation period.

Isolation of those with COVID-19

The person who tests positive for COVID-19 is still required to isolate at home for 10 days from the onset of symptoms or, if asymptomatic, 10 days from the positive test date. A person who is immunosuppressed or was hospitalized may need a longer isolation period of 20 days.

Educational Options

Based on increasing numbers of positive cases, schools should expect interruptions to the school year and plan for contingencies. DESE and ADH will work closely with districts to monitor local situations and to assist if prolonged school closures or prolonged remote learning becomes necessary.

Students and staff should stay home when sick. Districts should review attendance policies to be sure that COVID-19 isolation and quarantine requirements are taken into consideration when dealing with student and staff absences, as well as state and federal requirements for staff and students with disabilities. Flexible attendance policies will be needed for individual students and staff in order to continue teaching and learning options while unable to be at school due to COVID-19 impacts. Policies should be communicated with parents and staff. Students and families should feel confident that students can remain connected to their school even when they are not able to attend in person due to COVID-19 isolation or quarantine requirements.

AMI Pivots for school-wide or district-wide COVID closures

Responses to positive COVID-19 isolation and quarantines should be as strategic and targeted as possible. In cases where a classroom or grade level pivots to remote learning, the district should ensure the necessary tools for ***blended learning*** are in place to facilitate the continuation of teaching and learning for small groups of students and staff.

In the event that an entire school or district must modify on-site instruction and pivot to ***remote learning***, the school or district will follow the district's approved Alternate Method of Instruction (AMI) plan. If positive cases have evolved to the point that an AMI day is necessary, the superintendent ***shall*** take the following steps:

- Notify the designated DESE POC - the list and contact information will be sent to each superintendent; and,
- Report the AMI day in the *LEA Insights* portal, which is the same process that was in place last school year; The AMI day for the school or district will also be reported in eSchool; and,
- Participate in consultations with the DESE and ADH.

Superintendents will be sent the link and instructions for logging in to the *Insights* portal. This process will help the DESE and the ADH better understand the magnitude of the COVID-19 impact in local areas throughout the state. **Districts are reminded that AMI days are counted as student contact days; therefore, AMI plans should include meaningful and engaging learning activities that can be completed remotely by every student.** If a district (or a school within a district) exceeds the 10 approved AMI days as a result of closures due to COVID-19, weather, power outages, contagious outbreaks, or other extenuating circumstances, the district will consult with DESE.

Digital Learning Plans

Digital learning plans were submitted by school districts utilizing the Act 1240 waiver process. Each application went through a rigorous vetting process at the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) before being recommended to the State Board of Education (SBE). Approval by the SBE allowed necessary waivers for the district to operate a remote or blended learning programming option for students in addition to their required in-person instructional option. Students enrolled in an approved digital program will be coded and recognized as a virtual student and may have different requirements than traditional students.

The deadline for districts to submit a plan for a digital program was May 1, 2021; however, many districts in the state opted to not offer a digital option, due to Covid-19 cases declining in the spring. Due to changing conditions, these districts are now faced with the demand of parents wanting an option other than in-person for their children. In response to the growing demand and concern, the division is going to reopen the digital learning application to districts that did not apply prior to May 1st to allow for a contingency plan option until a full review can be completed. Information regarding this option for districts to apply is in Commissioner Memo COM-22-017. The DESE and SBE will follow the same rigorous vetting process for this group of digital applications to ensure quality options for students. Parents should consult with their districts about instructional options.

Public Health Considerations

The Secretary of Health, in consultation with the Governor, has authority over all instances of quarantine and isolation throughout Arkansas, as necessary and appropriate to control disease in the state of Arkansas, as authorized by Ark. Code Ann. §§ 20-7-109 and 20-7-110. See also ADH Rules Pertaining to the Control of Reportable Diseases, which provide for the prevention and control of communicable diseases to protect the public health, welfare, and safety of the citizens of Arkansas. The COVID-19 Delta variant is now the predominant COVID-19 strain in Arkansas. The Delta variant is two-to-three times more transmissible, which means that an infected person can spread COVID-19 to twice as many people as observed earlier in the pandemic. The COVID-19 Delta variant appears to cause more severe disease and a greater

likelihood of hospitalization in unvaccinated young people than we observed earlier in the pandemic. While adolescents over 12 years of age and adults can be protected from the Delta variant by the COVID-19 vaccines, children under 12 remain at high risk. Children represent an increasing proportion of new COVID-19 cases, including hospitalizations and severe disease. In light of the spread of this more transmissible variant (and potential future strains), ADH and ADE urge schools to maintain as many mitigation measures as possible, or risk increased spread within the school setting.

This document addresses updates to the public health guidance and is based on the public health situation with COVID-19 as it is understood today. Guidance will be updated as needed if additional or new guidance is made available by the CDC. DESE and the ADH will continue to monitor conditions and work with districts to respond accordingly. School officials, parents and community members are encouraged to work together to plan and to implement as many strategies as possible to make the return to school and continued in-person learning opportunities successful again this year.