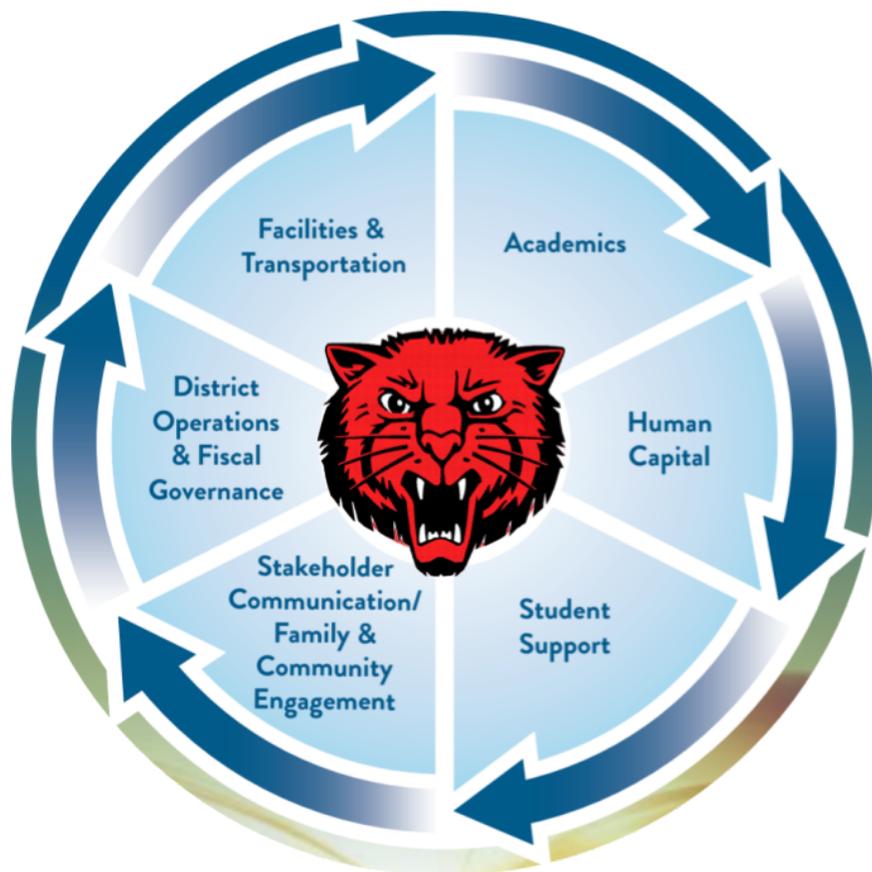


MENA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Bearcats Ready for Learning Plan



(Created: July 16, 2020)

(Revised: July 22, 2020)

(Revised: October 21, 2020)

Revision Page(s)	Topic
6-7	Changes related to mask mandate
9-10	Changes related to mask mandate and school personnel to contact for positive test results.
1	Changes made to address disengaged learners by adding a Flex Friday option

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INTRODUCTION

CHOICES

ADDITIONAL CHOICE OF FLEX FRIDAYS

The Mena Public School Board recently approved a change to the district's 2020-2021 Ready For Learning Plan. The plan change creates a 4 plus 1 blended day schedule. This means Monday through Friday will be school as normal, but Friday will be a Flex Day. This Flex Friday will consist of on-site, blended and virtual PCVA students. The first Flex Friday will be October 30th

Flex Fridays give parents and students the option of learning from home or attending school. Students who choose to learn from home on Flex Fridays will not be counted absent. Instruction on Flex Fridays will be 100% virtual. These are catch-up days for students and staff. There will be no new content taught or major assignments given.

Meals will be provided to students that choose to attend school on Flex Fridays. Pickup meals will continue being provided to Blended and Virtual PCVA students by a completed online meal form.

Buses will continue to run regular routes on Flex Fridays. After a couple of weeks, adjustments will be made to Flex Friday bus routes. We will provide bus route updates as adjustments are made.

We have listened and trust the feedback received from our students, parents and staff. Flex Fridays will give protected time for added tasks that have come with this unusual school year. We feel this will bring relief to everyone including students, parents and staff.

We appreciate your understanding in these very difficult times.

~ END OF REVISION OCTOBER 21, 2020 ~

WHAT WE CANNOT CONTROL

We have all felt helpless at times during the COVID-19 pandemic. There are still things this school administration cannot control, but it is the goal of Mena Public Schools to empower our students and their families again with a sense of normalcy in their daily routines. We feel that our plan will help accomplish this but there are some things out of our control. Please read on...

We cannot control the impact of COVID-19 on our schools. We cannot control the guidance we have been given from our state's education and health officials. We cannot control the reactions of our patrons to our plans in this difficult time and we understand those reactions will be varied. We cannot control the decisions and results of the past. There are numerous other things we cannot control; but that is not the focus of the Bearcats at this time. We are focused on what we *can* control!

WHAT WE CAN CONTROL

What we *can* control is the mission of Mena Public Schools during this difficult time: Mena Public Schools will provide the *high-quality* education it always has both traditionally at school and at home.

Mena Public Schools will provide the *high-quality* education it always has both traditionally at school and at home.

When Mena Public Schools was closed by the State on March 17th, 2020, the teachers, administrators, and staff at Mena Public Schools began scrambling for a means to deliver an education to the students of this district. Once we were told that we were not to introduce any new material, we accepted those instructions but continued to explore ways to reach the students of the district.

Since then our teachers, administrators, and staff have been laboring at developing a way to continue educating our students for the Fall of 2020. We have used guidance from the Arkansas Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, borrowed ideas from other districts, and held many brainstorming and committee sessions to be able to bring you this document.

We can control how we react to our situation and deliver a high-quality education. You have control over how you will proceed with your child(ren)'s education! We have provided *Choices* for how your child(ren) will be educated; how we plan to *Control* the spread of

COVID-19 and prevent outbreaks; and, a *Question and Answer* section to answer questions we already anticipate.

We ask that you carefully read and examine the content of this document and assess what is best for your student(s) considering the parameters we, and you, have been given.

CHOICES FOR LEARNING

For parents of students at Mena Public Schools, there will be three choices for continuing your student's education:

- *Traditional Learning*
- *Blended Learning (a mix of virtual and traditional education)*
- *Polk County Virtual Academy*

TRADITIONAL LEARNING

Selecting ***Traditional Learning*** means that your child(ren) will be learning in a school setting that is familiar and somewhat normal with some adjustments that are detailed in the Q & A section below. They will be issued a school owned Chromebook with an online curriculum ([Edmentum](#)) taught by their teacher in the traditional face-to-face format. The online curriculum is the backup plan in the case of a school closing or if your child(ren) are quarantined due to COVID-19.

If you are a parent who wants the most normalcy for your child(ren), you would want to make this choice.

BLENDED LEARNING

Selecting ***Blended Learning*** means that your child(ren) will be learning at home with the option of returning to school when you deem that it is safe. It is structured to match the traditional school day to ease the transition back into the traditional classroom. There are more details in the Q & A section below. If requested, your child(ren) will be issued a school owned Chromebook with an online curriculum ([Edmentum](#)) taught by their teacher in an online format. The online curriculum is the same curriculum the students who are being taught traditionally will receive, only with less face-to-face interaction from their teacher(s).

If you are a parent who is concerned about your child(ren) returning at this time due to COVID-19 and would rather wait until you feel things are safer, you would want to make this choice.

POLK COUNTY VIRTUAL ACADEMY

Selecting ***Polk County Virtual Academy*** means that your child(ren) will be learning in a very non traditional setting. Making this choice will mean that the curriculum will be delivered in a self-paced, self-guided manner. There are details in the Q & A section below. If requested, your child(ren) will be issued a school owned Chromebook with an online curriculum ([Edmentum](#)) that is geared toward a self-motivated student. There will be some support from the district.

If you are a parent who is concerned about your child(ren) returning at all due to COVID-19 and you feel that your child(ren) can learn independently, you would want to make this choice. For an informational video, [click this link](#). To apply for PCVA, [click here](#).

There are still many details about the regular school day that will be uncertain until we know how many students to expect; such as, how your child(ren)'s teacher will arrange their classroom or how band practice will be conducted. These are things that are still unknown at this time, but we hope this document will provide enough information for you to make an informed decision in the best interest of the ones you love.

PART ONE

CONTROL OF COVID-19

Mena Public Schools is making preparation for students to learn in the safest environment possible. We have considered student and faculty arrival/dismissal procedures, bus arrival/dismissal procedures, lunch schedules for students and staff, and each building's instructional schedule and will make adjustments when feasible to be consistent with current Arkansas Department of Health (ADH) and Arkansas Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE).

MASKS OR OTHER FACIAL COVERINGS

Governor Asa Hutchinson issued a statewide mandate requiring the wearing of face coverings. With some exceptions, the Directive requires every person 10 years of age and older to wear

a face covering completely over the mouth and nose in both indoor environments and outdoor settings when distancing of six feet or more cannot be assured. Face shields do not substitute for masks. More details are provided in the Q & A section below.

TRANSPORTATION

Bus transportation of Mena students will continue and scheduled routes will remain the same. Parents who want to bring their child(ren) to school will be allowed to in the same manner as in previous years. Bus and car rider schedules may be adjusted as the year progresses and as things change.

SOCIAL DISTANCING

Social distancing of 6 feet when not wearing masks will be enforced whenever possible. A distance of 12 feet will be required when teachers are without masks and delivering lectures or other instruction to students. Classrooms will be adjusted to accomplish social distancing where feasible. Other adjustments to classroom space will be made depending upon circumstances. For instance, high school classes will be separated into other rooms when class sizes are too large.

CLEANING AND SANITIZING

Mena Public Schools will provide many hand sanitizing stations in classrooms and hallways. Signage in bathrooms will emphasize the importance of hand washing and instruct students on proper procedures. The district has purchased state-of-the-art antimicrobial electrostatic systems to disinfect classrooms, hallways, commons

areas, and buses. These systems will be used on a routine basis and in the event of outbreaks. Furthermore, general cleaning agents will be used along with further disinfection training of administrative, teaching, clerical, and custodial staff.

PART TWO

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

We understand that there are particular questions you may have so we have anticipated some with answers provided. If you have other questions, please email your specific COVID-19 related questions to Mena Public Schools at: MenaCOVIDQuestions@menaschools.org. We will try to answer them as quickly and accurately as possible.

Q: When will school start?

A: As of July 16th, 2020, school will begin on August 24th, 2020.

Q: Will students be required to wear face coverings?

A: a. Currently, Arkansas Governor, Asa Hutchinson, is mandating that all individuals 10 years old and over wear a

face covering. Mena Public Schools is following the Governor's mandate that adults and students age 10 and up wear face coverings when physical distancing cannot be achieved, particularly on school buses.

b. Students under 10 years of age and those with health issues and special needs will not be asked to wear face coverings. Student and adult exemption from wearing masks will require documentation from a health care provider to support a claim of exemption due to a medical condition or disability that prevents the person from wearing a face covering.

c. Students will be required to wear face coverings in areas with a high concentration of students where social distancing cannot be maintained.

Q: What do I do if my child or someone in my household tests positive for COVID-19?

A: Notify one of these people at the school:

Shane Torix, (479)216-6644 or your school's nurse.

Q: If we want our child(ren) to wear masks do we provide our own or will they be provided?

A: Both. The district will order facemasks for students, but they may not arrive in time for school and they may not be comfortable for your child(ren); therefore, we are encouraging parents to provide facemasks, as well.

Q: If I choose Traditional, how normal will the school day be?

A: Our goal is to make the school day as normal as possible. Each building will develop its own plan.

Q: Will our students have extracurricular opportunities and extra classes like P.E.?

A: Yes. The instructors of these courses will receive materials, equipment, supplies, and training for delivery and social distancing to provide these classes in as normal a situation as possible. The number of students we have coming to school will determine the planning we will need to conduct.

Q: Will school meals still be provided to all students?

A: Yes. Students who receive traditional schooling will be served meals to be eaten in alternate locations or on alternate schedules to allow for social distancing. Students who choose blended or PCVA will be allowed to pick up their meals at a location and time to be determined.

Q: Will my elementary student still have recess?

A: Yes. The recess schedule will be changed to allow social distancing with the same level of supervision. We will accomplish this by limiting the number of students on the playground at the same time, shorten recess time, and limit the number of students allowed on playground equipment.

Q: Will social distancing always be practiced?

A: Not always. If you choose traditional or blended during this time there will be some risks. Social distancing will be in place where it is feasible, but sometimes it is not feasible. For example, on buses we will not be able to enforce social distancing guidelines. Therefore, we encourage wearing masks even more. When we are not able to enforce social distancing, masks will be strongly encouraged.

Q: Will classrooms be arranged differently?

A: Yes, if needed. Some classrooms will be able to accommodate social distancing with all students in the class. Classes that are more crowded will spread out to different areas of the building (for older students) or have furnishings removed to allow more space for students to spread out.

Q: If someone tests positive for COVID-19, what will happen?

A: First, the person who tests positive will not be allowed on campus. The district administration has had much communication with ADH and DESE for instructions on what to do. We will follow the most current guidance from these agencies and keep parents informed to the extent allowed by law.

Q: If someone at school has symptoms, what will happen?

A: In short, usual procedures for sick students will be followed. Individuals with symptoms will be isolated from

other students until they can be sent home to avoid further exposure. The district will have health care professionals, ADH, and administrative primary contact personnel to coordinate these events as they happen.

Q: If I choose Blended or PCVA but want to switch to Traditional, what do I do?

A: Before sending your child(ren) back to school you must arrange a reentry conference with your child(ren)'s school by calling the school's office to make the request.

Q: What about sports?

A: Mena Public Schools will follow all guidelines and rules set forth by the AAA and the ADH where sports are concerned.

Q: Currently, the AAA is requiring student athletes to wear masks at certain times. Will this continue once school starts?

A: All student athletes will be required to follow current AAA guidelines. If guidelines change before August 24th, Mena Schools will notify athletes and parents and will remain in compliance with AAA rules.

Q: Will students and adults be screened daily?

A: Faculty and staff will be screened daily at their buildings. Students will need to be screened at home by parents and

guardians. If the need arises during the school day, further screening of students will be done by school personnel.

Q: If I choose virtual or blended, will my child(ren) be able to participate in extracurricular activities?

A: Yes, but transportation to and from school must be provided by the parent or guardian. The student must also fulfill all participation requirements set for by the AAA. Further questions may be directed to the Athletic Director.

Q: Will we have Open House?

A: At this time we are planning a Virtual Open House to be conducted by your teacher(s).

Q: How will Mena Public Schools help my child(ren) catch up on the learning lost from last year?

A: Students will be assessed to determine their level of proficiency. After this, learning plans will be developed for each student to address their academic needs. We will continually monitor their progress and respond with interventions as needed. Exact Path on Edmentum will be the primary monitoring tool throughout the district.

Q: What will happen if school closes again?

A: The online curriculum ([Edmentum](#)) being delivered in all three choices will be continued with daily interaction from your child(ren)'s teacher(s). The period of closure will be a

minimum amount and the district will keep parents informed as the closure progresses.

Q: What advice would you give to parents with child(ren) who have compromising health conditions or special needs?

A: The Student Support Committee met on Monday, July 13th, 2020, and discussed ways to accommodate students with special needs. The accommodations will vary from student to student with expert advice from Counselors, Special Education Teachers, Behavioral Specialists, and administrators for the best solutions for your child(ren).

Q: In the event of a school closure, how will students with special needs be served?

A: The Student Support Committee met on Monday, July 13th, 2020, and discussed ways to accommodate students with special needs. Some solutions were: Mindplay for continued learning and Zoom video conferencing for support. The accommodations will vary from student to student with expert advice from Counselors, Special Education Teachers, Behavioral Specialists, and administrators for the best solutions for your child(ren).

Q: Can you guarantee the safety of students and staff?

A: No. However, we cannot guarantee safety under normal circumstances, either. We can guarantee that the staff at Mena Public Schools will make the safety of our students a top priority.

Q: How will my child(ren) be graded if I choose Blended or PCVA?

A: If you choose Blended, your child(ren) will be learning under the supervision of a Mena Public Schools teacher and will be graded by them according to the same standards as the traditional students. If you choose PCVA, your child will be learning under the guidance of an Arkansas state certified teacher and will be graded by them according to course standards.

Q: What if I don't have Internet access and want one of the virtual options?

A: The District may be able to provide hotspots for households that have good cell phone service or another reliable Internet provider subscription. If your household does not have reliable Internet, you should not choose either of these options unless absolutely certain this is what is best for your child(ren). Please consult a school official for further details.

Q: If I have a new student or a kindergartner, do I still need to register my child(ren) for school?

A: Yes. No matter what choice you make for the 20-21 school year, you should still register new students for kindergarten or if you are new to the district. Powerschool registration forms and instructions can be found on the District website, [click here](#).

PART THREE

CLOSING THOUGHTS

There may be many unanswered questions you still have. You have the email address from page 7 to send your questions to. Please let us know what we might have forgotten:

(MenaCOVIDQuestions@menaschools.org). Also, teachers and/or administrators will be reaching out to you by phone during the week of July 20-24 to ask which decision you will be making and answer other questions you might have at that time. So, please be ready to take a call and let us know what you will be choosing.

Please remember that we are all in this together and that we at Mena Public School sincerely care for the wellbeing of your child(ren) and

will do all in our power to keep them safe while delivering the same *high-quality* education that we always have.

Resources

[American Academy of Pediatrics Guidance for School Reentry](#)

[Arkansas Department of Health: COVID-19](#)

[Arkansas Department of Education: COVID-19](#)

[Centers for Disease Control: COVID-19](#)

[Johns Hopkins Analysis of School Openings](#)

DISTRICT TEAMS

Integrated Team for Academics

Louise Durham: Dee Ann Smith, Holli Plunket, Shannon Miller, LaShea Holder, Tiffany Williams, Tawana Ricker, Katie Thomas, Mandy Maddox

Holly Harshman: Brittany Ford, Tisha White, Donna Golden, Rachel Carter, Amanda Posey, Cindy Brevik, Paula Cox, Misty Mullen

Mena Middle: Sherri Sikes, Malea Ellison, Sheli Chaney, Melissa Lunsford, Staci Brooks

Mena High: Celeste Ashcraft, Amanda Threlkeld, Andrea Hughes, Justin Goodnight, Teresa Torix, Jerusha Neufeld, Julie Gordon, Aaron O'Brien, Stephanie Hoyle

Health & Safety

Becky Richardson, Jimma Holder, Lisa Falls, Sherry Wood, Bobbi Baker, Robyn Castor, Jill Newbolt, Bridget Martin, Susan Rowell, Susan Body, Amy Bartow, Mary Wagner, Cassidy Ashcraft

Monday, July 13, 9 AM to 11 AM

Student Support

Linda Collins, Vickie May, Leilani Rose, Tonya Thacker, Ashlyn Watts, Shanda Craig, Christy Harrison
Monday July 13, 1 PM to 3 PM

Facilities & Transportation

Danny Minton, Shane Torix, Joe Bunch, James Davis
Tuesday, July 14, 9 - 11

Human Capital

Principals, Assistants, Superintendents, Danny Minton, James Davis
Tuesday, July 14, 1-3

District Operations & Fiscal Governance

Admin Team, Susan Bodey, Amy Bartow
Wednesday, July 15, 9 - 11

Community Engagement/Stakeholder Involvement

LD: Jennifer Brewer, Jessie Starr, Patty Oglesby, Tracy Floyd, Charmayne Martin

HHE: Ashley Vacca, Stephanie Miller, Holly Montgomery, Amy Scott, Sara Francis

HS: Heather/Rodney Grenier, Ashley Harris, Donita Gann, Jesicca Smith, Chelsea Johnson, Heather Grenier, Ashley Harris, Lauren Frost, Teresa Warner

Wednesday, July 15, 1-3

Technology for Blended and Remote Learning

Tech Department, Principals
At a later date

