



DRAFT

Return to School Road Map Update - August 3rd, 2020

This is a DRAFT ONLY. A comprehensive plan is still under development.

Full-week schedule: Meridian Public Schools will offer families two learning options for the 2020-2021 school year; in-person instruction (so long as our region remains in phase 4 or better) or enrollment in Meridian Virtual Learning Academy program.

The in-person option will resemble a traditional Monday-Friday schedule. Due to the unique scheduling options available to 11th and 12th grade students through Meridian Early College, a hybrid instructional option will be available to students in these grades. No other part-time, in-person option is planned at this point.

We will offer an online option for parents who wish to forgo the in-person education at this time. Students/Families choosing the online option will commit for a semester at a time. Online learners will have access to a Michigan certified teacher, and be supported and mentored by a Meridian teacher. Additional information regarding the Virtual Learning Academy will be discussed during our introductory Zoom webinar on August 4th. You can register online for the meeting at tinyurl.com/merpsvirtual

Families who select the online/virtual option will need to provide the home support (a teacher supports content within the curriculum) needed to guide their children through the education process. Younger school-age students require significantly more support. Early elementary students focus deeply on learning foundational skills. As students mature, less direct parent guidance should be required to be successful if the student possesses independent study skills and strong time management skills. Virtual/Online Students take all classes online/at home and only come to campus for scheduled/approved activities. For the 2020-2021 school year, students choosing the online/virtual option will be permitted to participate in athletics and extracurricular activities representing MERPS.

Transportation: We expect buses to run their regular routes each day. Drivers will wear masks, disinfect each bus twice daily, and assign seats for the 20-21 school year. Windows will be left open as long as weather permits. In the event drivers are ill or symptomatic, they will not drive their route. Students are required and expected to wear masks on the bus (documented medical exemptions will be observed).

Education on Hygiene: Students & staff will receive training with guidance from the Health Department and certified health care providers about proper handwashing, physical distancing where possible, virus spread, and risk mitigation.

Masks are required in phase 4 for grades 5-12, and for grades K-4 when students are mixing or moving throughout the building, with a handful of exceptions. Meridian will honor medical exemptions (a note from a doctor is required) for masks, emphasize teaching & empathy, and work to protect the health & safety of everyone in our district. The district has ordered a supply of paper and cloth masks for students and staff.

Cleaning: Meridian implements reliable cleaning protocols for everyone's safety and to mitigate health risks. All cleaning products, protocols, and procedures meet or exceed industry standards set forth by governmental health organizations and they apply to classrooms, offices, athletic facilities, food preparation areas, common areas, and hard surfaces in every MERPS building/facility. In addition, Auxilio (our transportation provider) meets all industry standards as well for our transportation vehicles and facilities. All learning environments have been deep cleaned this summer.

Spacing & Movement: Work stations, students, and teachers will be spaced as far apart as is possible and reasonable. In many cases, seating will all face the same direction. Considering all our district's resources (funds, facilities, teachers, & students), we expect most classrooms to look very similar to a regular school year. Depending on the number of families who choose a virtual school option, there could be a reduced number of students in our buildings for the 2020-2021 school year.

Potential shifts to online/remote learning: A resurgence of Covid-19 or government order may require schools to temporarily halt in-person learning and shift to remote learning. This is our hybrid model that will allow us to shift between in-person and online learning. We learned a great deal this spring, and remote learning during the 2020-2021 school year will be more rigorous and powerful than our measures implemented this spring. We have the best learning management system available with ECHO thanks to our partnership with the New Tech Network. We are going to expand the use of ECHO throughout the District this fall, so students in grades K-4 will be using the same system as our 5-12 students.

Next Steps: We will continue to update you as our plans "finalize" for the coming school year in Meridian. This is a Working Draft, and we know there are many details you have questions about. Our full plan will be released following Board approval on or before August 15th.

Feedback Needed: We want to ensure you that we are working with you as a partner in the education of your children. You can send us feedback and questions to Return2learn@merps.org. We are preparing a FAQ document which will be published and updated on a frequent basis.