



INSTRUCTIONAL MODEL SHIFT SPRING 2021 FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. What changes will take place and when will they happen?

Secondary students will have the opportunity to return to school four days a week. This change will take effect as follows:

- Middle School beginning Monday, April 26, 2021
- High School beginning Monday, May 3, 2021

Wednesdays will continue to be a virtual learning day for all students in the District.

2. What is the rationale for changing the instructional model?

Several factors were examined while reaching this recommendation:

- The CDC recently reduced the recommended physical distancing in schools from six feet to three feet, meaning more students could safely be served in each classroom.
- As of March 29, 91% of reporting staff indicated they had received the first dose of a vaccine and 68% reported being fully vaccinated. The number of staff being fully vaccinated will continue to rise. Additionally, students aged 16-18 became eligible for a vaccine on April 5.
- We have seen a decrease in positive COVID cases in our community and schools.

3. What data were used to make this decision?

We examined our community and school trends, analyzed other districts' data at the secondary level, consulted with the Eau Claire City-County Health Department (ECCCHD) and our regional medical experts on viral transmission research from the CDC and Wisconsin DHS, and evaluated our past success with our viral mitigation strategies.

4. Will CDC and ECCCHD guidelines be followed in the new model?

The new CDC guidelines include masking (respiratory etiquette), ventilation, washing hands, cleaning protocols, and maintaining three feet of distance. We will be following them as closely as possible, although we acknowledge we will not be able to adhere to the three feet of distancing between students at the secondary level in some cases.

5. What cleaning and disinfecting processes will be in place?

Deep cleaning of buildings will continue to occur on Wednesdays and Saturdays. Daily cleaning and disinfecting of classrooms will continue.

6. What about the new strains of COVID-19 that have been identified in the County?

Current guidance indicates that the vaccine is effective against these strains. What cannot be prevented is quarantining after an exposure.



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7. Will quarantine rules be relaxed in this model?

No. The quarantine expectations will continue to keep our staff, students, families, and community safe. Additionally, because we will not maintain six feet of distance between students, any student who is quarantined must quarantine for the full 14 days per Wisconsin Department of Health Services requirement. The only exception is for students and staff who are fully vaccinated.

8. What happens to students who are in blended learning now but would not feel comfortable attending if mitigation strategies changed (i.e., social distancing not being guaranteed)?

The lack of consistent physical distancing may cause families to be uncomfortable with this change. These families will contact their student's school counselor to discuss potential alternatives to in-person learning. Options available will depend on the courses assigned to each student and determinations will be made on a case-by-case basis.

9. How will we support the social emotional needs of students making a transition?

We anticipate this transition will feel somewhat like the start of the school year and how teachers prepare students for the transition back to school from summer break. Teachers establish a sense of community by developing classroom expectations, routines, and procedures within the classroom. This transition will give teachers the opportunity to establish a new classroom community. Social emotional learning will continue to be incorporated throughout the day and individually to students as needed.

10. How will we support the emotional needs of staff during this transition?

We surveyed staff to understand their feelings about their comfort in the classrooms, communication regarding vaccine opportunities, and continued data sharing via their principals. We will also support our staff with the resource of time for planning and understanding from their supervisors or principals. In addition, we have provided Compassion Resilience sessions and CANVAS courses with many good resources for staff to use to support their own social and emotional health. In addition, we have been sharing in the weekly District Update Monday De-Stress tips for all staff.

11. What about teachers that are teaching different courses to Cohort A and Cohort B students?

There are several teachers at the high schools who teach different courses to Cohorts A and B. The principals of these teachers will work with their teachers and the Human Resources Department to determine how to best support transitioning these classrooms to four days of in-person learning.



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12. Will Cohort C students be able to return?

Cohort C students will remain 100% virtual. Families that have middle and high school students in Cohort C who are interested in changing their instructional model may contact their student's school counselor. Although a change from Cohort C is not guaranteed, each request will be considered.

13. If a staff member is currently 100% virtual, will they stay virtual?

Staff who are in 100% virtual instruction due to ADA requests may be contacted by the Human Resources Department regarding accommodations and assignments.

14. What do the county data look like?

County data can be found on the [Eau Claire City County Health Department website](#).

15. What is the benefit of coming back with only 5-6 weeks left of school?

We know that there is tremendous value for in-person classroom learning at all levels, and we are excited about the change for secondary students. One benefit is getting students back into a positive learning routine by maximizing instructional time this spring. Another is that we know our students' mental health is impacted positively by increased socialization with their peers. Finally, we can also assess student learning to be better prepared for the fall.

16. Why is this plan for four days and not five days each week?

Wednesdays must be used for teachers to support students' virtual learning as well as instructing the 2,000 students in Cohort C. Also, in April and part of May, buildings will be used on Wednesdays for State testing of Cohort C. Additionally, we have received feedback that some community members and families rely on our secondary students to watch younger children or their own siblings on Wednesdays.

17. Will IEPs need to be updated with this change in the instructional model?

Yes, any IEP that does not reflect the student's instructional model and the special education services the student will receive, will need to be updated to reflect changes.