



COMMUNITY UPDATE

July 23, 2020

Dear Jeffco families, staff, and community,

Since the announcement of our **Restart Plan** on July 8th, we have been engaging in daily conversations as conditions and our knowledge of COVID-19 has evolved. We have also been collaborating with and receiving guidance from Jefferson County Public Health (JCPH), Colorado Department of Public Health & Environment (CDPHE), Colorado Department of Education (CDE), Jeffco’s Board of Education, building leaders, staff, and our employee associations to gather feedback on our announced plan. We have continued to monitor the data about the spread of the virus and the decisions made by other school systems locally, nationally, and internationally.

Under these dynamic conditions, no plan is truly final. New information, data, and guidance from public health experts continue to inform our thinking and decision process about how best to restart schools for the 2020-21 school year.

On Monday, July 20th CDE and CDPHE released guidance for school reopening in Colorado. Based on these guidelines, feedback from our staff and community, and with a deep commitment to health, safety, and equity, we are announcing important changes to our Restart Plan.

Scheduling and Reopening Models

Jeffco Public Schools will open with 100% remote learning for a two-week period beginning August 24 through September 4.

On September 8, we plan on opening elementary schools (PreK-5) with 100% in-person and 100% remote options for families. For secondary schools (grades 6-12), we plan on opening with a hybrid schedule providing alternating days (A/B groups) of in-person learning and a 100% remote option for families.

This decision will allow us to better plan and prepare for in-person experiences, and to review the new health and safety procedures with students and families. It will also allow us greater time to prepare for a quality remote learning experience for those families who choose that option for their students.

August 24 - September 4: All students begin classes in a **Remote Learning** environment.

August 31 - September 4: Remote learning continues and all students who have selected in-person learning will attend an orientation at their school building on a schedule developed by each school. Remote-only learners will also have an orientation opportunity, to be developed and planned by each school. Families will hear from their student’s school by July 31 with additional start-of-school details specific to their school.

Tuesday, September 8: PreK-5 begins 100% in-person learning (with an ongoing remote-only option). Grades 6-12 begin hybrid learning.

The opening of schools on September 8 with in-person and hybrid options for Jeffco Public Schools will be contingent on virus levels in our community. Depending on how COVID-19 is spreading in our community, we will move between remote learning, in-person or hybrid learning, and fully in-person learning depending on public health levels as determined by JCPH. These levels and the type of learning model we will use are summarized in the diagram below:



As can be seen, Jeffco Public Schools will move between remote, hybrid, and full in-person models depending on local public health determinations.

- **Stay at Home** - Remote learning for all students.
- **Safer at Home** - Begin school year in remote learning, shift to 100% in-person/remote options for PreK-5 and hybrid/remote options for middle school and high school.
- **Protect our Neighbors** – Shift to 100% in-person/remote options for all students after consideration of the state virus threat level, community infection rates, and available protective factors (i.e. the presence of vaccine and the demonstration that our virus mitigation efforts for in-person learning are effective).

Our ability to reopen schools and restore in-person learning experiences is contingent on the people in Jefferson County, and in the state of Colorado, doing their part to keep the spread of the virus down in our state and communities. The conditions under which we reopen schools are all of our responsibility.

Increased Mitigation Efforts

In addition to the changes to the schedule for the beginning of school and changes to our learning models depending on conditions, we will also have a number of virus mitigation efforts designed to build upon those already detailed in our Restart Plan. We have provided our virus mitigation steps below with greater detail and we have added a number of additional strategies.

Masks

All students and staff are required to wear masks or face coverings. Exceptions are made for health conditions and appropriate breaks will be taken. Personal protection equipment (PPE) will be provided to staff including masks (in some cases medical grade, depending on the role), face shields, gloves, and sanitizer. Supplies will be provided to students who need them. Students (or parents) who refuse to wear a mask and who do not have a valid and approved exception, will not be able to attend in-person classes. [Mask/Face Covering Dos and Don'ts](#)

Hand washing

Hand washing and sanitizing is required at regularly scheduled times during the school day. These schedules will be set and communicated at the school level. Students or families who refuse to follow the hand-washing protocols will not be able to attend in-person classes.

Social distancing

Schools and staff will practice social distancing, and utilize masks/face coverings and other appropriate protective equipment when 6 feet of distance is not possible to maintain.

Employee & student COVID testing

The District will provide for rapid availability testing for symptomatic staff and students or those who believe they were exposed to the virus. The District will also reimburse employees for out-of-pocket expenses they incur for private testing.

Cleaning classrooms

School classrooms and common areas will be cleaned regularly, and sanitized as needed, according to protocols developed by the Custodial Services Department, JCPH, and CDPHE. Cleaning will be completed primarily by our custodial staff, with light spray/maintenance completed by school staff during the school day. Cleaning and sanitizing classroom spaces will be everyone's job and responsibility and sufficient cleaning materials and supplies have already been purchased.

Student cohorts

Teachers will work with cohorts of students at all levels as assigned by a school principal or other administrator in order to limit contact between student groups.

PreK - 5th Grade: Students will stay with the same cohort of students for the entire day.

6th - 12th+ Grade: Students will be scheduled into much smaller student groupings than what is present in the typical middle and high school experience. Students will participate in a maximum of 4 classes during the school day. Additionally, given the hybrid learning model at the middle and high schools, students will maintain 6 feet of social distance.

Employee contact

Employees will practice 6 feet social distancing from one another. This includes during lunch breaks, planning periods, and in staff meetings or other professional development. Where possible, meetings of employees will be conducted virtually. Some exceptions for employees will exist for special responsibilities that require less than 6 feet distancing and in these situations, appropriate protective equipment and hygiene/sanitation must be used. Employees (including supervisors) who fail to adhere to these provisions to limit employee contact will be subject to disciplinary action including dismissal.

Screening processes and student medical safe rooms

Daily health checks and screenings (temperature and screening questions) will be conducted by trained staff at time of entry to the building. Any individual who does not successfully pass symptom screening will be moved to a medical safe room where they will be re-screened and supported until able to return home.

Trained district staff wearing the appropriate district-provided protective equipment will conduct temperature screening protocols and monitor students and staff entering buildings. Specifically, health aides, paraprofessionals, campus supervisors, office staff, and administrators will conduct screenings. Other staff may volunteer to provide these vital services and they will also be specially trained on proper procedures and provided the necessary protective equipment.

Ventilation

Ventilation system improvements and modifications have been made to reduce virus spread. Jeffco Public Schools buildings have ventilation systems that are centrally monitored and controlled. Metro area schools are all air conditioned. Mountain area schools have operable windows to open. All schools, regardless of location, have ventilation systems designed to bring in fresh air. The amount of outdoor air in all systems has been increased by 50-100% over prior levels. While occupied, the ventilation systems operate continuously. The volume of air in classrooms and other spaces is renewed, refreshed, and filtered 7.5 to 10 times per hour. Ventilation systems use specifically designed air filters to provide the maximum amount of filtration while not impacting air changes to rooms. They are inspected and changed on a regular basis. Temperatures will be closely monitored for comfort and to facilitate mask wearing.

A number of our facilities are receiving upgrades to ventilation systems as part of the Capital Improvement Plan funded by the passage of 5B in 2018. These improvements will significantly improve comfort and air quality and contribute to mitigating the spread of disease.

Employee support, protection, leaves and insurances

Employees are supported through any potential general and COVID illnesses with district benefits. Employees earn and accrue sick and other leave hours to use in the event of illness. Other federal and state leave requirements (additional sick leave through the federal Families First Coronavirus Response Act and the state Healthy Families and Workplaces Act) are available by working with the HR Leaves Department in accordance with the law. An Emergency Sick Leave Bank has been created and is functioning to support any employee who has work absences related to COVID-19 testing or diagnosis/treatment.

Employees carrying medical insurance may use it for any costs associated with illness treatment, per the plan rules. Currently, both of our medical insurance vendors, Kaiser Permanente and Aetna, have cost waivers in place for symptomatic testing and most treatments related to COVID-19 (when using in-network providers).

All regular employees have life insurance coverage provided by the District.

Lastly, in the event of a workers' compensation issue or claim, the District will follow state law in supporting the employee.

Quarantining and school closures

Decisions relating to quarantining or building closures will be made in collaboration with JCPH based on the facts and the individual circumstances. Minimally, if a student or staff member tests positive, the other students in their cohort, or any they may have had contact with, will be quarantined for a period of 14 days and transition to remote learning for that time.

Improvements in the Remote Learning Experience

Our shift to remote learning last spring has provided us with much insight and we will have a robust remote learning experience for all our students this fall. As described in the Restart Plan, we have now had time, through the summer months, to prepare technology, customize curriculum, unify resources, and create professional development for staff to deliver academic content in ways that meet the needs of all of our students.

Starting this fall, the following expectations will be put into place across our schools whether we are serving students in-person or remotely:

- Common Learning Management Systems (LMS) will be used across our school district.
 - Seesaw (PreK-2)
 - Google Classroom (3-12)
 - Schoology (6-12)
- Students will experience synchronous learning each day at an established time on a schedule to accommodate the courses they will need to complete.
- Each week, students will interact with their teachers in a face-to-face (Zoom or Google) environment.
- District assessments will be delivered remotely.

- Teachers will have student data to plan for remediation and extension.
- School-based staff will serve as community outreach liaisons to engage students and families to ensure success in remote learning.
- Teachers will develop and enhance tools for remote learning and in-person learning during the additional days for training (8/14 - 8/21) before the start of school.

Technology

Jeffco Public Schools is committed to working with our schools and various departments, community partners, businesses, and others to ensure students have devices and access to home internet for remote learning or hybrid learning. The following processes will support students and families to ensure access:

- **Assess the condition of your student's device.** If it was damaged over the summer, please call 303-982-3438 to arrange to drop it off to be repaired before the start of school. Call the same number if you are missing a part, like a charger. If you had multiple students sharing a device in the spring, let your school know.
- **Families of incoming 5th and 9th graders, look for communications regarding your devices.** All 5th and 9th grade students will receive a new device at the beginning of the school year as part of the [TechForEd program](#). Their old devices will be collected, cleaned, and likely reused in lower grade levels unless the purchase agreements for those devices stated the family owned them at the end of their educational use
- **Make plans for home internet access.** If you do not currently have internet access at your home, check to see if you are eligible and apply for the [Comcast Internet Essentials program](#). Additional [low cost internet options](#) are listed on the [district website](#) as well. If you are unable to obtain internet service, please let your school know so we can work with you to find a solution for your student.
- **Reach out to get support when you need it.** Bookmark our [device support page](#) on the Jeffco website and remember to call 303-982-3438 during the school year if your student needs technical support for remote learning.

What about athletics and activities?

For Colorado High School Activities Association (CHSAA) sanctioned athletics and activities, we will follow the guidance and directives being provided to the rest of the state. For non-CHSAA activities, those will move forward in the district using the same virus mitigation strategies and protocols described for in-school operations.

Next Steps: What do families need to do to prepare?

The best way to prepare for the week of August 24 is to stay informed - read emails from the District and your student's school, and regularly stop by [RestartJeffco](#), our one-stop shop for information, news, and FAQs. We know you have many questions and will be looking for information. We will update you via our *Community Update* email newsletter, on our [main](#) and [RestartJeffco](#) websites, and on our social media channels - [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#).

Families will hear from their student's school by July 31 with additional start-of-school details specific to their school. We will be updating the preference survey to reflect these changes and will send additional information about making your choice between in-person or remote learning next week. Please check your inbox and check your school's website.

In closing...

These changes in the Restart Plan reflect an honest effort to hear the concerns of our public and staff members, to adapt to changing conditions, and to adopt and use the latest and best scientifically informed public health guidance.

With that said, there are no perfect options before us. There are also no options that we expect everyone to agree with completely. What we have put forth here represents a balanced solution that puts the educational experiences of Jeffco's children first, honors the wishes of families, and responds to the concerns of staff members.

For this to work, we need everyone in Jeffco to get on board with helping to execute this plan - you have a role to play. It is not in our students' or families' best interests to proceed indefinitely with a remote only option and no real plan to emerge from that. It is also not acceptable to implement any in-person experiences without taking every precaution to protect our students and staff members from the harm this virus may bring.

If I have learned anything in my time in Jeffco, it is that the work in this community is in finding the balance between very different (and often polarized) interests. This revision to the Restart Plan finds that balance.

It is also important to note that none of these changes are permanent. We need solutions to get us to some point in the future when a vaccine is available to protect all of us from COVID-19. We need a plan to bridge us to that (hopefully near) point in the future.

I wish our circumstances and options were different, but they are not. For the sake of Jeffco's children, now is the time to work together to implement this effort with quality and fidelity.

Sincerely,

Jason E. Glass, Ed.D., Superintendent & Chief Learner

Members of the District Cabinet and the COVID-19 Incident Response Team

Summer **Food Service** Continues at 11 locations, M, W, & F, 10:30a - 1p - read more [here](#).

DONATE to Jeffco Schools Foundation - help Jeffco families impacted by COVID-19.

www.jeffcopublicschools.org

