

Francis Howell
School District



LEARNING TOGETHER

RETURN TO SCHOOL

>>> PLAN HIGHLIGHTS

* Plan may be modified as public health guidelines are updated.

JULY 20, 2020

FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

Greetings, Francis Howell families:

Due to the global COVID-19 pandemic, the 2019-2020 school year ended abruptly and not the way we wanted. When our schools open this fall, they will look a little different.

Every week, we learn more about COVID from our health officials. We know this virus is real. It's in our communities, and it may impact our schools.

We also know the value of in-person learning, and understand that being out of school for extended periods of time can have a detrimental impact on students' social and emotional well-being.

Over the past 90 days, task forces have been grappling with big questions: How do we bring kids safely back to school? How do we make sure our staff are cared for? How do we prepare for short- and long-term closures that may be required as the COVID situation continues to evolve?

As part of the planning process, we gathered feedback from families about their preferred way to return to school in the fall. There was overwhelming support for a return to in-person instruction.

That said, we realize not all families will be comfortable sending their student(s) back to the classroom just yet.

With this understanding, our task forces developed a Return to School Plan that respects and honors the individual needs of each family.

As parents and guardians, you have the ability to choose the right learning method for your child(ren):

- **OPTION 1: In-Person Classroom Learning** with added precautions and safety protocols designed to limit exposure and transmission of COVID-19 (this may be full-time or hybrid), or
- **OPTION 2: 100% Virtual Learning**, delivered by FHSD teachers with the same grading and accountability standards expected in the classroom.

The document that follows provides more detail on each of the learning options.

We are asking you to select a learning option for each of your children by July 26 via this [online form](#). This date is important as it allows teachers and administrators to appropriately plan for classes, bus routes, technology needs, and all the other behind-the-scenes work required to provide a quality educational experience.

I want to acknowledge the work of the task forces, educators, and health experts who have spent long hours discussing the tough questions and planning for what-ifs. I am also grateful to our families and community for your patience and understanding as we work together through this unprecedented planning-and-preparation challenge.

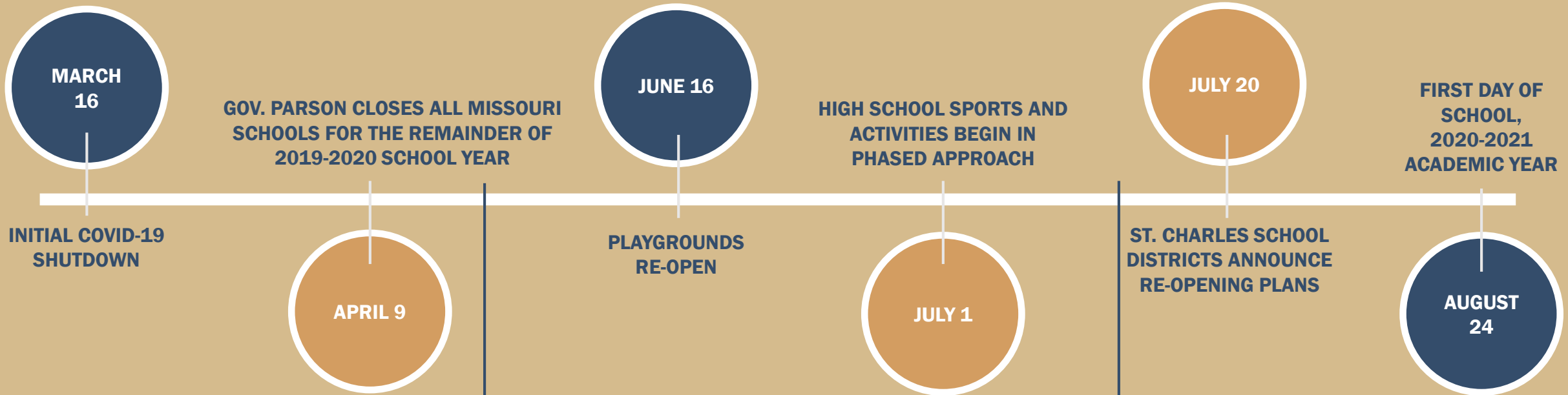
Stay well,



Dr. Nathan Hoven
Superintendent



TIMELINE



ROBUST COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

- PARENT/FAMILY RE-OPENING SURVEY
- CURRICULUM TEAMS
- FHEA TEACHERS' UNION
- FHESPA SUPPORT STAFF ASSOCIATION
- STAFF, FAMILY, AND STUDENT FOCUS GROUPS
- GUIDANCE FROM STATE AND LOCAL HEALTH OFFICIALS
- 7 PLANNING TASK FORCES

LEARNING OPTIONS

Choose the one that's right for you



IN-PERSON (FULL-TIME OR HYBRID)

- In-person instruction 5 days a week at the student's school building (if we're on a full-time model) or alternating days at school and days at home (if we transition to hybrid)
- Students, teachers, and staff will follow health and safety precautions
- Will switch to 100% virtual learning during any short- or long-term closures due to COVID-19



VIRTUAL

- 100% virtual curriculum delivered by FHSD teachers
- Students engage in virtual learning at home during typical school hours, 5 days a week
- Each student needs reliable Internet access and a dedicated device (no shared devices)
- Same attendance, grading and accountability expectations as in-person

PARENTS WILL BE ASKED TO SELECT A LEARNING OPTION FOR EACH STUDENT BY JULY 26



OPTION 1: FULL-TIME IN-PERSON

Regular classroom instruction, with some modifications

HERE'S WHAT TO EXPECT:

- **Masks required for staff and students 3rd grade and up when distancing is not possible**
- **Desks and students spaced apart (6 feet when possible) facing same direction**
- **Classroom doors open when possible**
- **One-way traffic in hallways and stairways as much as possible**
- **Hand sanitizer in classrooms and on buses**
- **No outside visitors, including volunteers, except for essential business**
- **Limit sharing of school supplies**
- **Lunch and recess with assigned cohorts for K-5 students**
- **Lockers by request only for grades 7-12 (6th graders will be assigned lockers)**
- **Water bottles recommended for every student**
- **No dressing out for PE**
- **No field trips or large assemblies at this time**
- **Virtual Open Houses and parent-teacher conferences**
- **District may transition to hybrid model or 100% virtual as COVID situation evolves**



OPTION 1: HYBRID MODEL

Students alternate classroom and virtual learning days

HERE'S WHAT TO EXPECT:

- **A/B alternating schedule where only half of enrolled students are in physical classrooms at any given time**
- **Students attend in-person learning at their school building 2 or 3 days a week, and engage in virtual learning at home the other days**
- **Smaller class sizes allow for 6-foot spacing between desks**
- **The same safety precautions in place as with full-time in-person learning**
- **If you choose in-person learning, please be aware that the District may elect to move from full-time classroom learning to a hybrid model based on the evolving COVID situation; this could happen before school starts on August 24 or anytime during the year**

If you are not comfortable with the idea of potentially moving to a hybrid model as the COVID situation evolves, please elect the Virtual Learning option.



OPTION 2: VIRTUAL LEARNING

100% virtual instruction and coursework

ELEMENTARY

- 100% digital curriculum delivered primarily by FHSD teachers
- Student may be assigned a virtual teacher from another Francis Howell school building
- K-5 families considering this option are encouraged to speak with their school principal to better understand the expectations and time demands
- Requires students to be online multiple times during the school day
- Requires parent or guardian support for approximately 5 hours per day
- Uses Google Classroom to track assignments and grades
- Grades, assignments, and assessments will be consistent with in-person learning
- Must commit to virtual learning for the entire semester



OPTION 2: VIRTUAL LEARNING

100% virtual instruction and coursework

MIDDLE & HIGH SCHOOL

- 100% digital curriculum delivered primarily by FHSD teachers
- Student may be assigned a virtual teacher from another Francis Howell school building
- Expect more structure, accountability, and live virtual instruction than during our temporary closure this spring; Grades, assignments, and assessments will be consistent with in-person learning
- Varied instructional methods requiring student to be online multiple times during the school day, 5+ hours per day; Requires parent or guardian support
- Virtual course offerings may differ (e.g., Ceramics may be reclassified as Art Appreciation)
- Will attempt to accommodate courses selected during spring registration; substitutions required for band, chorus, industrial arts, and others
- Uses Canvas Learning Management System to track assignments and grades
- High school students electing Virtual Learning are allowed to participate in activities and sports if they meet the eligibility standards outlined in the FHSD Athletics Handbook
- Must commit to virtual learning for the entire semester



EARLY CHILDHOOD

Supporting our youngest learners

HERE'S WHAT TO EXPECT:

- **Safety protocols similar to K-12, but adapted for the early childhood environment**
- **Social distancing guidelines enacted to the extent possible**
- **Masks and face coverings not required for early childhood students**
- **Staff will wear masks or face coverings when social distancing is not possible**
- **Families with students on IEPs can elect the virtual option if desired**



FOOD AND NUTRITION

Providing nutritious meals for all students

ELEMENTARY

BREAKFAST

- Students eat in classrooms

LUNCH

- Students sit with assigned cohort group
- Space between cohort tables
- Students enter, sit and exit by cohort
- No overlapping of grade level lunch periods
- No salad bars or cutlery stations
- No external food deliveries or lunch visitors for students
- Handwashing and sanitizer use prior to lunch
- Flipping recess and lunch to ensure handwashing

MIDDLE & HIGH SCHOOL

BREAKFAST

- Grab-and-Go

LUNCH

- More lunch periods to reduce cafeteria and line congestion
- Open other locations for lunch seating (commons, auditoriums)
- Students sit/eat with students from the class that determines their lunch schedule
- Grab-and-Go stations to the extent possible
- No external food deliveries or lunch visitors for students
- Use [Sodexo Happy App](#) to order food for pick-up
- Handwashing and sanitizer use prior to lunch



TRANSPORTATION

Bussing students safely to and from school

HERE'S WHAT TO EXPECT:

- Parents must opt-in for bus service
- Most buses with 2 students per seat; 1 student per seat on buses with low ridership
- Load from back to front, window seat to aisle seat
- Assigned seats that stay consistent
- Siblings required to sit together
- Masks required
- Hand sanitizer on each bus; encourage use
- Encourage 6' distance at bus stops and when loading at end of day
- Buses cleaned nightly and between AM/PM routes



CLEANING STANDARDS

Disinfecting classrooms and school buildings

HERE'S WHAT TO EXPECT:

- **Daily cleaning protocols in all classrooms and school buildings**
- **Frequent disinfection of commonly touched surfaces: handrails, doors, knobs, sinks, water fountains**
- **Cleaning products that meet stringent standards set by the Centers for Disease Control and Environmental Protection Agency**
- **Quat-based sanitizers that are not harmful to children if ingested (the same FDA-approved sanitizer found in many hospitals and health care facilities)**



MENTAL & EMOTIONAL HEALTH

Helping students thrive during a public health emergency

HERE'S WHAT TO EXPECT:

- Provide closure to the 2019-20 school year
- Daily check-in with each student
- Teach positive coping skills
- Proactive anti-bullying initiative around mask wearing
- Refer students to counselor or care team as needed
- Regular and clear parent communication
- Offer parent virtual meetings to allow for 2-way communication
- Resources for students, families, and staff will be published and updated on the district and school website



TEACHERS AND STAFF

Supporting the wellness needs of our employees

HERE'S WHAT TO EXPECT:

- **Masks required for staff and students 3rd grade and up when distancing is not possible**
- **PPE available for nurses and others based on job responsibilities**
- **Meetings held virtually as much as possible**
- **COVID-capacity limits posted in conference rooms and meeting spaces**
- **Must notify HR if traveling to areas with high COVID-19 rates**
- **HR will work with individuals who require extended medical leave or have underlying health conditions that may put them at higher risk**
- **Should have a “go bag” of supplies necessary to work from home in the event of a closure**
- **Training on ZOOM and other digital learning tools available**
- **Hiring additional substitute teachers in preparation for teacher absences due to illness**
- **Support and advocacy for work-life balance and self-care**

Look for the Employee Resource Guide later this week for more information on how the FHSD is supporting the wellness needs of our teachers and staff.



HEALTH GUIDELINES

Doing our part to minimize the spread of COVID-19

HERE'S WHAT TO EXPECT:

- **Self-screen for fever and symptoms at home every day before coming to school or work**
- **If symptomatic, stay home**
- **If symptoms occur during the school day, nurse will isolate the student until they can be picked up**

SYMPTOMS OF COVID-19:

**Fever or chills | Cough | Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing | Fatigue
Muscle or body aches | Headache | New loss of taste or smell | Sore throat
Congestion or runny nose | Nausea or vomiting | Diarrhea**



SYMPTOMATIC STUDENTS & STAFF

Balancing right-to-know with privacy and legal considerations

IF A STUDENT GETS COVID-19:

- The school will notify the families of:
 - students in the same class/cohort
 - students on the same bus
 - students on the same clubs/teams
- The St. Charles County Health Department will perform contact tracing and provide instruction to individuals who may have had extended close contact with the COVID-positive student
- The COVID-positive student is able to return to school when they satisfy the recommendations of the CDC

IF AN EMPLOYEE GETS COVID-19:

- The school will notify:
 - families of any students that may have been in close contact with the COVID-positive employee
 - all employees in the building
- The St. Charles County Health Department will perform contact tracing and provide instruction to individuals who may have had extended close contact with the COVID-positive employee
- The COVID-positive employee is able to return to school when they satisfy the recommendations of the CDC



COMMUNICATION

Providing timely and accurate information

EXPECT REGULAR COMMUNICATION

- Via your student's teacher and school building
- Monitor the District website for updates
- Sign up for the District eNews and your school's eNews
- Follow the District on Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube
- Download the District's free app (search "Francis Howell" in the App Store and Google Play)
- Make sure your contact information is up to date in our SchoolMessenger system



ATHLETICS & ACTIVITIES

Minimizing spread among players and coaches

HERE'S WHAT TO EXPECT:

- We are following the phased Return to Activities / Athletics plan and are currently in Phase 3
- Facilities limited to 50 or fewer participants (weight room limit of 30)
- Athletes must pass a daily wellness check prior to entering the practice venue
- Gatherings (huddles, gating, etc.) spaced out to allow for 6 feet social distancing
- Coaches use PPE equipment to hand out gear to student athletes
- Students provide and use their own water source and face coverings
- No spectators at practices
- Regular hand sanitizing and equipment wipe-down
- Shared equipment disinfected prior to use
- No penalties for missing practice time during the summer
- Athletes encouraged to stay home when ill



FACILITIES MANAGEMENT

Providing safe and welcoming learning environments

HERE'S WHAT TO EXPECT:

- Prop S Bond Issue projects will proceed as planned
- Regular ongoing site repair, remodel, renovation, and construction projects will continue
- Limited use of facilities by outside groups until further notice



RESOURCES

Providing access to instructional and learning tools

TECHNICAL SUPPORT AND EDUCATION AVAILABLE

- Devices (laptops, tablets)
- Accessibility support (hotspots)
- Parent webinars

HAVE QUESTIONS?

- Contact your child's school building (preferred)
- Send an email to covid19@fhdschools.org and we'll do our best to find an answer for you
- Remember that our plans may change based on new guidance from the health department

Don't forget to select a learning option for each student by July 26. Use THIS FORM to select In-Person or Virtual Learning, opt-in to bus service, and request tech support.

**Francis Howell
School District**



LEARNING TOGETHER

>>> LEARN MORE

FHSDschools.org/COVID-19

Translated versions of this plan and the accompanying survey will be available
Wednesday, July 22 for our families whose first language is not English.