



Board of Governors Meeting

August 3, 2020

FAQ

ICS 2020-2021 Academic Instructional Models

Fall Semester

- Q.** If the CDC recommends ICES close due to a confirmed case of covid-19, what is the plan to continue classes for those kids who did not sign up for the elearning option?
- A.** The CDC is a federal agency and will not have any involvement in closing Indianapolis-area schools; this would be the authority of local (city and/or state) jurisdiction. Should a diagnosed case come to our attention, our school staff will immediately contact the Marion County Public Health Department and the Indiana State Department of Health for further guidance based on the particulars of that given situation. A contact tracer from the ISDH or MCPHD will be assigned to each of these cases. We will follow the guidance determined by the local board of health.
- Q.** What measures will be put in place to protect staff members who are being required to be at their respective buildings to work during the full online portion of schooling?
- A.** Please refer to the just-published ICS School Reopening Safety Plan for details. Masking, social distancing, and hand-washing protocols per local, state, and national medical experts and agencies indicate that these are the most effective safety measures to prevent COVID-19 transmission.
- Q.** I have IPA students. Please explain the changes again for the high school. Thank you.
- A.** This semester we are asking that students participate in synchronous class sessions where teachers will present content live and be available live to support student learning. Additionally, teachers will have set office hours at the end of each day when they are available to assist any students who may need their help. If students need to schedule a 1:1 appointment to meet with a teacher outside of the set office hours, they may do so. Finally, advisors will check in with each student weekly on Wednesdays as well as communicating with parents regarding student academic and behavioral progress.
- Q.** What are the school start times for each building for both eLearners and Hybrid model learners?
- A.** **ICES:** Start time is 8 a.m. and dismissal is 3:15 p.m. for the Hybrid Model face-to-face school days. On eLearning days, attendance is taken at 3:30 p.m. and is based on completion of at least one assignment. **ICMS:** Start time is 8:15 a.m. for all eLearning students. Attendance is taken during the Advisory check-in 11:30 a.m. - Noon. **IPA:** Start time is 8:30 a.m. for all eLearning students. End times vary between 2-4 p.m. depending on schedules and if students need to work with a teacher during office hours. Details about how to manage the IPA eLearning schedule are provided in the eLearning guide.

- Q.** What is the ICS safety protocol and procedures for sanitizing the buildings and what chemicals or products are being used?
- A.** Day porters will be going through the buildings and cleaning all common areas, minimally, throughout the school day. Bleach water, Clorox wipes, and Nu-Foamicide disinfecting agents will be used.
- Q.** Please explain the rationale in the determination of allowing the ICES Hybrid Instructional Model to continue, but not at ICMS and IPA.
- A.** We are closely tracking the COVID-19 positivity (infection) rate throughout Marion County specifically. As stated at Monday evening's ICS Board of Governors Special Meeting, the positivity rate has been steadily high for the past two consecutive weeks, hovering around 10-11 percent of late. Based upon Marion County Public Health Department guidance for schools to operate as fully open, open in a hybrid model, or all virtual, and given our emphasis on school safety -- a tenet of The Irvington Way -- and our more careful conservative approach to student and staff safety, we believe the rates are too high to justify safely reopening ICMS and IPA as planned. Notably, current COVID-19-specific research strongly indicates that younger children are not shedding the virus at the rates of older kids. These factors were key in us making this difficult but necessary decision.
- Q.** Why is ICS requiring teachers to teach virtually from their classrooms? What are the benefits of this model?
- A.** When we went into emergency shutdown on March 13, suddenly our organization was completely virtual -- which it had never been previously. Now that we are intentionally planning to reopen in a virtual mode for ICMS and IPA for the time being, it's important for staff to be working in their buildings once again. This provides an essential continuity that was previously lacking last quarter. It also allows for much-needed collaborative professional development activities, which can be conducted safely by observing the recommended protocols. Such collaborative opportunities will only enhance our eLearning program's level of effectiveness and student engagement as we work together to continuously improve the student and family experience. Further, we will be working hard to maintain that critical student and staff connection -- which Irvington Community Schools are renowned for. By having staff together on site, developing response methodologies to address particular student situations -- academic and otherwise -- will be enhanced by immediate access to involved team members. As well, the administrative team has worked together through the summer, largely in person. This has been vastly more effective from an organizational productivity and collaborative standpoint.
- Q.** How many cleaning/personal hygiene (sinks and toilets) facilities are available for the staff in each building and how many staff members in each building? What's that number for student facilities and number of students in each building. How often will these be cleaned and by whom?
- A.** Each building has a one Day Porter assigned for cleaning/disinfecting daily. Each building has the required number of facilities available for use by students and staff.
- Q.** Why is ICS not requiring that teachers or staff take temperatures of students twice a day for everyone's safety?
- A.** The Indiana State Department of Health recommends that parents take care of this precaution as a family responsibility. As well, slowing down the start of the school day by taking student temperature readings at school is disruptive. Parents are well positioned to manage this child healthcare measure.

- Q.** What will happen with high ability students if they do e-learning? Will they be taught at a high ability level or will the teachings be at a mid level curriculum?
- A.** Unique learners will still have their needs met. Teachers at the high school and middle school already have teacher-leaders that help to coach other teachers on differentiating for high ability, and that collaborative effort will continue. At the elementary, the teachers charged with eLearning may not be the teachers that have received the formal eLearning training, but will be collaborating closely with their grade-level peers who have.
- Q.** How many students will be in each classroom in the elementary school now that one teacher will be solely instructing virtual learning? Will social distancing measures still be met?
- A.** We will have that confirmed on Friday at the close of our second round of full-time elearning sign-ups. At present, we are projecting 10-12 students per class. Social distancing is at the heart of our hybrid approach, so this will be absolutely achievable with those numbers.
- Q.** When will ICES be able to announce teacher and student assignments?
- A.** Class list changes are now complete internally, but are not updated in Power School yet. Teachers will work on connecting with their newly added students asap. E-Learning teachers are: Mrs. Walden (KG), Mr. Blascow (1st), Mrs. Uhlman (2nd), Mrs. Barnes (3rd), Mrs. Feltman (4th), Mrs. Cox (5th). Students who are attending the hybrid model and were originally in one of those classes have been moved to a new teacher.
- Q.** How is Chromebook distribution working at ICES?
- A.** ICES will host a student device pick-up for full-time e-learning students on Thursday, Aug. 6, Noon - 6 p.m. AND on Friday, Aug. 7, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. Students signed up for the Hybrid Instructional Model will get their device on their first day of classes per their assigned cohort.
- Q.** During her presentation last week, Dr. Caine recommended schools have an opt out plan for high risk students and staff. Has that been developed, or has it just been too soon?
- A.** Mayor Hogsett introduced that idea without providing adequate details, and Dr. Caine frankly did the same. For students with an Individualized Instruction Plan (IEP) or 504 Plan, we will absolutely honor whatever accommodations are deemed necessary. We are providing all of the recommended medical precautions and measures for all staff members, which includes those in any high-risk medical category. Individuals with more specific concerns should discuss them with Human Resources. Please note that we are abiding by federal and government requirements per the Families First Coronavirus Response Act and Family and Medical Leave Act. There are also some rare situations in which short-term disability may come into play. Again, any concerned employee should contact HR.
- Q.** This new plan does seem very wise and provides more stability. The only thing up in the air is the middle school for the second quarter. What is the current thinking about how to make this determination? Would families have the option to continue e-learning?

- A.** The ICS Leadership Team will make a determination two weeks prior to the end of the first quarter with regards to continuing distance learning or starting in-person learning based on the data available at that time.
- Q.** Will ICS offer any special help for students labeled as ELL or SPED and who might need one-on-one help? Or, will teachers and administrators be able to make these determinations as needed?
- A.** As with any learning situation, provisions for ELL and SPED students will be provided in compliance with their ILP or IEP as decided in their case conference. All students will be monitored by the ELL Coordinator or SPED Teachers of Record as appropriate to their needs. These staff members will work closely with both teachers and students to ensure they are receiving their accommodations and any added support they may need to be successful in their educational program.
- Q.** Can you share again the current plan and timeline for the ICMS eLearning? Why would ICMS go back to school for a few weeks before winter break and not just do virtual for the whole semester? Will students with special needs such as dyslexia have time assigned to meet with an instructor.
- A.** The ICS Leadership Team will make a determination two weeks prior to the end of the first quarter with regards to continuing distance learning or starting in-person learning based on the data available at that time. Students with special needs will work closely with staff members to ensure they are receiving their accommodations and support. Parents are encouraged to reach out to ICS Staff at any time with specific questions as to their student's support.
- Q.** Will ICS provide a video or live virtual orientation specific to e-learning and managing the scheduling aspect?
- A.** ICES, ICMS and IPA students will receive an eLearning Guide with their Chromebook that outlines specifics about how to manage their schedule as well as other tips for success. This guide also includes links to tutorials for a number of programs that are used during eLearning. Students will also receive additional information during morning announcements, first day of classes (distance learning and in-class students), and will receive helpful links via the various learning platforms. Additional resources will be forthcoming including at-home toolkits with time management, scheduling and at-home study spaces tips.
- Q.** Will e- learning options be offered again the second semester if a parent finds it work out well for their student?
- A.** Unfortunately, we can't answer this question at this time given how fluid the pandemic situation is. As mentioned at the board meeting Monday evening, we have adjusted our reopening plan for the first quarter for ICES and ICMS and for the semester for IPA. We will, of course, make our decisions available to parents as soon as possible.
- Q.** For scheduling purposes, can IPA students watch the lessons when time permits? How will this work for life skills students? And, how do students still gain access to school-sponsored therapeutic services?
- A.** While it is preferable that students attend their classes during the synchronous live lessons, we understand that there may be times when they are not able to do so. Teachers will record their live lessons so students can access them at a later time. They will need to make sure they check in with their scheduled classes each day to stay on top of assignment due dates. Skipping even one full day of classes can cause students to fall behind and

become overwhelmed. Students who receive therapeutic services will be contacted by their service provider to make appropriate arrangements for them to receive those services.

- Q.** How will this semester's eLearning delivery and platform differ from last semester's?
- A. ICES:** Streamlined platforms. ALL students begin their day by checking their agenda in Google Classroom. Adjustments to grading practices including no late work accepted more than one week after it was assigned. Pre-recorded video lessons from teachers. Office hours for every grade level twice daily. **ICMS:** Students are assigned and will follow a "Cohort" schedule to receive virtual and face-to-face support with teachers through mandatory Google Meets on assigned "class" days. Synchronous class periods are required on the Monday/Thursday and Tuesday/Friday days. Students will still receive more independent assignments, activities, and assessments on their eLearning days weekly with afternoon teacher check-ins. **IPA:** Students are asked to participate in synchronous class sessions where teachers will present content live and be available live to support student learning. Additionally, teachers will have set office hours at the end of each day when they are available to assist any students who may need their help. If students need to schedule a 1:1 appointment to meet with a teacher outside of the set office hours, they may do so. Finally, advisors will check in with each student weekly on Wednesdays, as well as communicate with parents regarding student academic and behavioral progress.
- Q.** If there is a positive COVID-19 case, and that individual has been in one of the ICS buildings, would those they came into contact with be notified, and quarantined as well? what is the procedure or protocol for the school?
- A.** Should we be notified of a positive COVID-19 case involving a student or staff member, our school nurse will notify the Marion County Public Health Department and the Indiana State Department of Health. A contact tracer will be assigned to the case and will be provided contact information by the school to reach out to potentially exposed students' families or staff members. Quarantine guidance will be provided the local health department.
- Q.** Can you explain more about how the ICES Hybrid Instructional Model will work? How will teachers coordinate lessons and assignments with students and parents? Are there any resources available to assist parents?
- A.** Students will receive direct instruction face-to-face, then on their next e-learning day they'll be assigned practice activities to ensure they've mastered those skills. When they return to school face-to-face, teachers will check for understanding before moving on. Office hours to help both parents and students will be available twice daily.
- Q.** How many students signed up for everyday e-learning last week? Is the decision to go ICS staffed full e-learning in-part or in-full, a financial based decision based on the number of students that were signing up?
- A.** The decision to staff the ICS full-time eLearning option was made with our parents' strong preference for that in mind. As we deliberated further, we found a way to make that happen. We do have the financial wherewithal to pay for eLearning vendors. But as we looked at this situation harder, we came up with a solution that should work well for all concerned -- students, staff, and parents.