

Looking ahead to the 2021-22 School Year

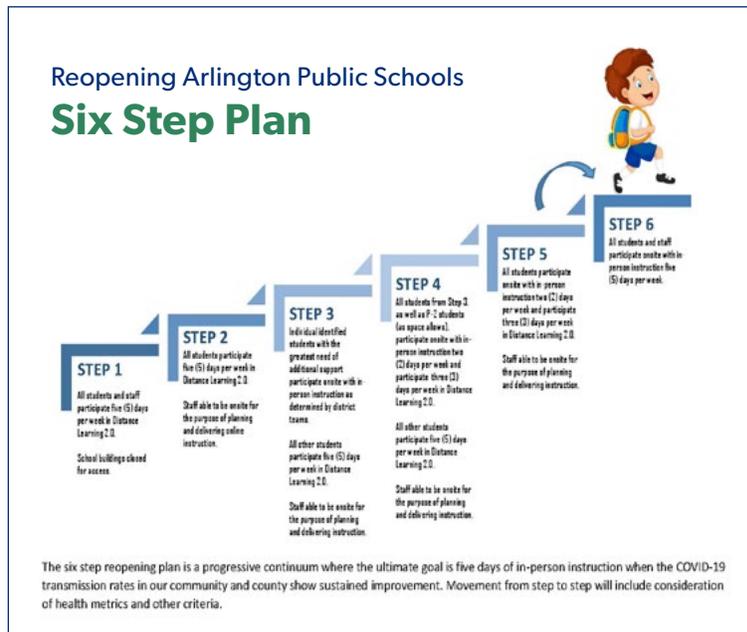
Dear Arlington Community,

Over the last 13-14 months, we have faced many challenges as we have maneuvered the COVID-19 pandemic. There have been many lessons learned. There are things we will leave behind once we return to a “new normal” and there are things we will want to keep. Lesson learning will continue as well as engaging in positive problem-solving to find viable and innovative solutions to support increased student learning and achievement for each Arlington student.

As we move forward, we will continue to carefully review both regional and local health metrics. This will be paired with listening carefully to the recommendations of the Snohomish Health District in order to identify the appropriate next steps for reopening schools. We are currently on step 5 of our six-step plan for reopening schools.

This means, at this time most students are receiving in-person instruction in a hybrid model. There are about 240 students in grades K-5 receiving instruction through the Committed Distance Learning (CDL) Program and about 297 students receiving either partial or full time instruction through the Arlington Online Program (AOP). These instructional models will continue for the remaining few weeks of this school year.

On May 10, the board approved planning to begin next fall on step 6 which means students are back on campus full time (dependent on Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction and Department of Health recommendations and requirements). There are logistics that need to be addressed but we are hopeful we will return to a better “new normal” beginning in September. We will continue the AOP K-12 Program for families who still want a remote learning opportunity. At this time, we do not plan to continue the CDL Program. The CDL Program has been successful and



has provided an additional learning opportunity for this year. We are grateful to the staff who have served in this program.

We are developing an Advancing Academics & Student Well-Being Plan that will help us move forward. It will identify specific diagnostic assessment tools by grade level; identify student learning and well-being gaps; and will identify specific strategies and supports for the students most impacted.

In this *Our Schools* publication, you will read more about the challenges we have faced, the

lessons we have learned and the hope we hold for the future.

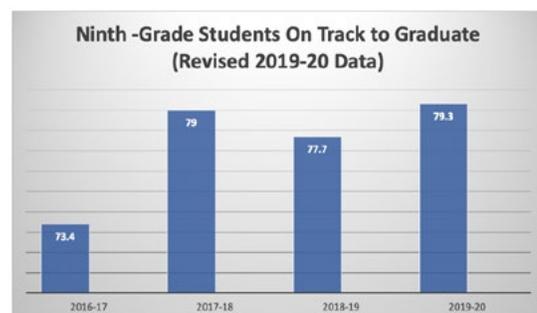
Thank you for partnering with us to prepare, educate and inspire EACH Arlington student. We are meeting all challenges TOGETHER!

Chrys

Dr. Chrys Sweeting, Superintendent

CORRECTION:

In the last issue of *Our Schools*, the rate for our ninth grade students on track to graduate for the 2019-20 school year was preliminary. The revised and final data reveals a slight increase in the number of ninth grade students on track to graduate.





“When we were going back to school, the one thing I was worried about was wearing a mask for 6 hours a day. But honestly, when you are having that much fun, you barely notice it at all!”

Lylee Belisle, Fifth Grader, Eagle Creek Elementary



“Although I really miss how school used to be and I hope that we can eventually go back to normal, I think Committed Distance Learning was the best choice for me this year!”

Isaiah Pelicieux, Third Grader, Committed Distance Learning

ELEMENTARY Hybrid



Kindergartners and first graders returned to campus last fall in a hybrid model on Oct. 5. The hybrid model means that half of the students are on campus Monday and Tuesday and the other half of students are on campus on Wednesday and Thursday. When students aren't on campus, they are learning from home. Following winter break, all grades returned to a distance learning model until Jan. 19, when K-3 grades returned to campus in a hybrid model. Fourth and fifth grade students returned to campus on Feb. 16 in a hybrid model.

WHAT'S WORKED WELL?

- Students engaging with their friends, teachers, and learning in person.
- Students and staff are so happy to be back in person.
- Small class sizes are great.
- Students and staff are doing a great job following safety protocols.
- Engagement, attendance, and learning have increased since being back on site.

LESSONS LEARNED

- We miss our volunteers but know parents are working so hard.
- Offsite work completion has decreased once we were back in person.
- Zoom is a great way to increase attendance at parent events but so hard for teaching young students.

Other Learning Programs

(Stillaguamish Valley Learning Center, Arlington Online Program, Committed Distance Learning)

At the Stillaguamish Valley Learning Center (SVLC), students in grades kindergarten and first worked with their classmates and teacher two days per week virtually. Students completed home learning activities (assigned by their teacher) on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. Students in grades 2-8 connected with their teachers and classmates three days a week for virtual instruction. They completed home learning activities (assigned by their teacher) on Monday & Friday.

In Arlington Online Program (AOP), K-12 students completed online courses for the entire school year 2020-21 with support from an Arlington Public School teacher. Learning was self-directed, however, there was a weekly obligation to connect with the support teacher and check in (via Zoom). This was for families who preferred to have their child remain in remote learning the entire school year even if schools reopened for on-site instruction.

Committed Distance Learning (CDL) was an option for K-5 families who preferred to have their child remain in remote learning the entire school year even if schools re-opened for on-site instruction. It provided five days a week of live, certificated instruction on Zoom. We had two classes per grade level. Teachers from every elementary school participated. We were also able to provide Special Education services through this program.

WHAT'S WORKED WELL?

- AOP: Had multiple students who finished their coursework early for the year.
- AOP: Students are allowed to have a flexible schedule to complete class work. This gives students the opportunity to concentrate on a subject, rather than moving from subject to subject every 50 minutes. This can be a much better way for students to learn and retain information.

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“Returning to on-campus learning was the happiest moment that I had since the closure in March 2020. It was so great to come back to school and see all of my teachers and friends.”

Isabella Anderson, Eighth Grader, Haller Middle School



“For me personally, the most rewarding benefit of returning to in-person learning is the opportunity for us being together again. In this period of self-isolation, it is very fulfilling to get together again!”

Ali Amezcua, Senior, Arlington High School, Student Advisor for Advisory Council for Education (ACE)

MIDDLE SCHOOL

Hybrid

Middle school students returned to school in March in a hybrid model. Sixth graders returned on March 8 and seventh and eighth graders returned on March 15. The week delay was to provide sixth graders with a chance to become familiar with the school before seventh and eighth graders returned.

WHAT’S WORKED WELL?

- In-person learning allows teachers and other staff to connect with students to address some of their social emotional needs.
- When students are attending class in person, connectivity issues at home are less of a concern.

LESSONS LEARNED

- Distance learning was challenging for many middle schoolers. This can be seen in the increased number of students failing classes and not attending virtual

classes. Weekly counseling sessions, teacher interventions, individual student/family meetings, attendance phone calls and home visits helped address these concerns.

- Social emotional needs of students also increased during COVID-19 due to social distancing, masking, decreased gatherings and events, and not seeing friends.
- Connectivity is a significant obstacle for many families in rural areas or who have multiple children accessing the internet at the same time.

HIGH SCHOOL

Hybrid

High schoolers returned to the Arlington High School and Weston High School campuses on Monday, March 22. AHS freshmen had their “Link Day” orientation day on March 19, the Friday before school started.

WHAT’S WORKED WELL?

- Huge increase in overall student attendance - Both AHS and Weston had an Average Daily Attendance of 92% for the first week of hybrid.
- Increased student engagement.
- Overall, students are complying with COVID-19 protocols.
- The feedback from students has been largely positive, especially increased access to teachers and support personnel for assistance.

LESSONS LEARNED

- Class attendance was a struggle for many students during distance learning. Virtual peer mentoring, teacher interventions, frequent school communication and home visits helped increase attendance.
- Special education and English Language Learners had increased class failure rates than those of general education students during distance learning. Due to this, these were some of the first students let back onto campus so they could receive more directed learning.



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Other Learning Programs

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- SVLC: Students were already used to a hybrid model of learning and therefore our class cultures/learning could continue for the most part successfully during Zoom classes.
- CDL: students were able to see a teacher every day and interact with other students virtually.

LESSONS LEARNED

- AOP: The kids that did well in AOP were kids that had strong study skills and/or parent monitoring at home. It was difficult for families that were struggling during the school closure to offer support through this program as the program was not set up to offer academic support other than communication about progress with the families.

- SVLC: The social component of school was largely missing during Zoom classes and generally led to less engagement by the students, especially as the months went by and we were still in Zoom classes.
- Transitions are hard for kids. Successful students have parents/guardians who help ensure they complete their tasks for home learning/AOP, students generally aren't able to manage themselves on AOP and do need parent/guardian support, having multiple grade levels and meeting all needs is more challenging than a "traditional" classroom but is also a lot of fun.
- CDL: Some students struggled if they didn't have some sort of support at home.

Arlington Public Schools seeks feedback from families and community members

Arlington Public Schools seeks feedback via a survey from families and community members about the district and its schools. Results from the 2021 Family and Community Survey will be used by schools in developing School Improvement Plans and to help schools and the district improve communications with families and community members.

"In addition to our annual Family and Community Survey questions, we're also asking questions to address student needs resulting from school building closures and extended time in distance learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic," said Dr. Chrys Sweeting, Superintendent. "Answers from these questions will help us develop our Academic and Student Well-Being Plan to support students moving forward."

The survey is available on the front of the district website at asd.wednet.edu and linked below:

<https://bit.ly/APS2021Survey>

The survey will only take a few minutes to complete. Families with more than one child in the district should complete a survey for each child. The survey will be available through June 4.



Arlington Public Schools provides equal educational opportunity and treatment for all students in all aspects of the academic and activities program without discrimination based on race, religion, creed, color, national origin, age, honorably discharged veteran or military status, sex, sexual orientation, gender expression or identity, marital status, the presence of any sensory, mental, or physical disability, or the use of a trained dog guide or service animal by a person with a disability. The District will provide equal access to school facilities to the Boy Scouts of America and all other designated youth groups listed in Title 36 of the United States Code as a patriotic society. District programs will be free from sexual harassment. Auxiliary aids and services will be provided upon request to individuals with hearing, vision, or speech disabilities.

The following employees have been designated to handle questions and complaints of alleged discrimination:

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