



Media Release

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BOARD WORKSHOP OFFERS RECOMMENDATIONS FOR REOPENING SCHOOLS

(Bradenton, FL - June 25, 2020) Today, Manatee County School Board Members heard Superintendent Cynthia Saunders reopening recommendations for public schools in August which includes face masks coverings and eLearning options for families not yet ready for a full return to school. School Board Members will hear final details of the back to school plan at a Board Workshop on July 9th and a vote will be taken at the July 14th Board Meeting. The health, safety and well-being of students, faculty and staff is the School District's utmost priority as we continue to monitor the COVID-19 (Coronavirus) pandemic.

Careful deliberation took place in the creation of the plan, which includes a multifaceted approach to safely reopening schools while providing a high-quality instructional experience. More than 20,000 people recently provided feedback through a survey with 54% of Manatee County parents choosing a plan that includes a traditional return to school in August.

During the School Board Workshop, Superintendent Cynthia Saunders presented the following tentative plan for reopening on August 10, 2020:

Elementary Schools (Grades K-5)

- All students, grades K-5, will return to brick and mortar instruction full-time, five-days a week (with the exception of students whose parents opted for eLearning Manatee).

Middle Schools (Grades 6-8)

- All sixth grade students will return to brick and mortar instruction four-days a week with eLearning one day a week (with the exception of students whose parents opted for eLearning Manatee);
- All seventh and eighth grade students will participate in a hybrid schedule which includes eLearning with brick and mortar instruction weekly;
- Students in self-contained classrooms will return full-time.

High Schools (Grades 9-12)

- All students, grades 9-12, will participate in a hybrid schedule which includes eLearning with brick and mortar instruction weekly (with the exception of students whose parents opted for eLearning Manatee);
- Students in self-contained classrooms will return full-time.

Manatee Technical College

- Students will participate in a hybrid schedule which includes a combination of brick and mortar and eLearning depending on the program and number of students.

eLearning Manatee

eLearning Manatee is a model designed for families who want to maintain their connection to their enrolled Manatee County school, yet don't feel comfortable sending their student(s) back to campus in-person this August. It is similar to distance learning during the 4th Quarter of the 2019-2020 school year. eLearning Manatee students will be assigned a teacher from their enrolled Manatee County school and be able to participate in all school activities and events. To register for eLearning Manatee, parents should contact their child's school as soon as possible - or visit <https://www.manateeschools.net/eLearning> for more information.

General Operations

By following the CDC guidelines below, the School District of Manatee County is showing our commitment for the safety of students and staff.

- Request employees and students who are sick - or have recently had close contact with a person infected by COVID-19 - to stay home;
- Temperature checks will be taken daily for students and staff;
- Face mask coverings to be worn by students and staff;
- Teach and reinforce proper handwashing techniques among students and staff;
- Encourage the use of hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol;
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces within schools and on school buses daily or in-between uses as needed;
- Make necessary social distancing adjustments in schools;
- Limit non-essential visitors and volunteers.

Face Mask Coverings

Board Members are in agreement there will be an expectation that face mask coverings will be worn by all staff and students while inside District buildings and schools, including school buses. Details of the expectations will be voted on during the July 14th Board Meeting.

Transportation

All students planning to ride a school bus for the 2020-2021 school year must Register to Ride. Pre-registration provides the Manatee County School District's Transportation Department with necessary data to ensure the safety of students and staff. Please note: all students will wear a face mask covering while riding the bus. The deadline to register is Tuesday, June 30, 2020. Parents may register their student(s) at <https://www.manateeschools.net/registertoride> or by calling 941-782-1BUS, Monday through Thursday from 7:30 a.m. until 4 p.m.

Further Back to School Details

Further details about specific school schedules, bus schedules and extracurricular activities such as sports and marching band, are expected be available by mid-July. Updates will be posted on MySDMC Focus app, www.manateeschools.net and social media.

The School District of Manatee County will continue to follow recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Florida Department of Health, Florida Department of Education and our local government and health officials.