



## **Twin Cities Academy 2020-2021 School Reopening Plan**

### **Introduction**

Twin Cities Academy is located on the east side of St. Paul in Ramsey county. Per the guidance from the Minnesota Department of Education, TCA can use the Ramsey county cases per 10,000 people numbers to determine its instructional model for the 2020-2021 school year. TCA has instead chosen to review 14 day average case numbers by both the city of St. Paul and the zip code in which it resides for more accurate predictions to determine the level of safety for students and staff in its school building.

TCA has created a five phase plan for reopening that is both transparent and flexible to minimize any learning disruption caused by the changing environmental factors of the pandemic. To do this TCA has worked with a planning committee since late June to develop detailed plans for each model and to procure the appropriate resources to ensure that both safe and rigorous learning environments can be delivered to all students throughout the school year.

### **Planning and Improvement Process**

In the spring of 2020, Twin Cities Academy, like all Minnesota schools, was required to move to a distance learning model with only eight days to plan. TCA recognizes that its distance learning model last spring requires significant improvements for the 2020-2021 school year. After reviewing the lack of technology and other resources TCA was able to offer students, limitations to its available online learning platform (Google Classroom), and based on important feedback and suggestions for improvements from families, students and staff, TCA needed to make significant upgrades to its models for the 2020-2021 school year. Administration and the school board first recognized the need for buying more Chromebooks. At the end of the last school year, TCA purchased 400 Chromebooks to ensure that each student could have a Chromebook. This is a significant change, which will now allow TCA teachers to deliver “live” synchronous classes

in a distance learning environment. No student will need to share technology with a sibling, which limited synchronous learning last spring.

TCA also heard from parents and students that the learning platform (Google Classroom) was sometimes hard to navigate and that grades, missing assignments, etc. were not the same on Infinite Campus and Google Classroom. Teachers also reported that they wished for additional functions and easier ways to hold “live” classes with students. TCA has invested in Schoology, which is the same platform many other large districts successfully use. Schoology only requires one login for all the different online tools (Khan Academy, etc.) and connects directly to Infinite Campus so that both systems show the same information.

Given there are so many details related to both a distance learning and hybrid model, TCA formed a planning committee of teachers, administration and support staff, to ensure all the health and safety protocols are in place alongside developing a more rigorous set of expectations for teachers, staff and students so that learning is brought back up to the rigorous standards of a college-preparatory school. The committee has been meeting weekly (and sometimes multiple times a week) since early July to come up with solutions for the many challenges this school year may bring.

## **General Considerations**

### ***Health and Safety***

TCA has identified Ms. Arlene Seashore in collaboration with Navigate Consulting Health Services and the executive director, as the COVID 19 coordinator. Ms. Seashore will be communicating with the Department of Health regularly regarding best practices to reduce the spread of COVID 19, and ensuring that all staff and students are trained properly in the use of PPE, including masks, as well as hand washing and social distancing expectations per CDC and Minnesota Department of Health guidelines for K-12 schools. Additional steps have been taken as well:

- HVAC system filtering is being upgraded to ensure a more robust filtration system is used to prevent the spread of COVID through air circulation.
- Sanitation stations have been installed in all classrooms to include hand sanitizer and disposable disinfecting wipes. Students will be expected to use hand sanitizer as they enter and exit the classroom, and will also be expected to use a disinfecting wipe on their desk or table at the beginning and the end of class.
- All classrooms have been set up to accommodate 50% of a typical class size (10-15 students) with 6 feet between each workspace and the teacher.

- Students will not use lockers with the possible exception of putting winter coats or boots away. All materials for the day will be carried in backpacks and students will not use lockers during the day to prevent crowding in the hallways.
- TCA has developed a block schedule to limit passing time. Students will have four 80-90 minute classes per day, with one distance learning day per week with all 8 classes for shorter periods. (See schedule below for more details.)
- Passing time will be staggered by grade level to prevent crowding in the hallways and allow for social distancing. Students will be expected to walk directly to their next class.
- Bathroom use will be allowed only during class time and monitored to ensure only one student is in the bathroom at a time. Bathrooms will be closed during passing time.
- Drinking fountains will be turned off, students will be asked to bring water bottles from home.
- Students will have lunch in classrooms, greatly reduced number of students may be allowed to eat in the cafeteria with meeting social distancing requirements, or weather permitting may eat outside (picnic style).
- Additional janitorial contracted services and disinfecting services have been added to evening cleaning, to allow for more staff janitors to be available during the day for continuous cleaning of common areas and bathrooms.
- Upon arrival at TCA (bus arrival and departure will be staggered) students will be directed to enter the school through one of three entrances to allow for social distance upon entering and exiting the school.
- 50% capacity on school buses will be maintained in Phase 2, 3 and 4 models. Students will have a seating assignment on the bus to ensure maximum social distancing. Students who regularly disregard their seating assignments will be asked to learn via distance learning instead of in person learning.
- Students are required to wear masks at all times except when eating lunch or drinking water. Any student who does not wear a mask properly per the Governor's orders for K-12 schools will be sent home and distance learning will be set up for them. Face shields may be considered only for those students with conditions that prevent them from using a face mask. Students may choose to wear both a face mask and a face shield for added protection if they wish.
- One cloth face mask will be available for free for each student. TCA will also have disposable face masks available for anyone who forgets their mask.
- Cloth face masks not provided by TCA may be worn, but may not be distracting or have any slogans, or writing on them.
- Questionnaires about COVID symptoms, and temperature checks for students and staff will be done daily.
- Any student with COVID like symptoms will be quarantined in a designated and ventilated area (the current weight room) until they are picked up by a parent or guardian.

Following MDH and CDC guidelines the room will be sanitized and remain unused for any other purposes.

- All parents/guardians and students must sign an agreement to all health and safety expectations and provide updated contact information and at least two emergency contact numbers, including someone able to pick up a sick child, before the student will be allowed to have any in-building instruction during the 2020-2021 school year.
- Parents/guardians as well as other adults such as volunteers and non-staff will not be allowed inside the school other than in the vestibule at the front door area. This is to prevent additional exposure of more people in the school setting.
- All adults in the building are required to wear masks per the Governor's Orders at all times with the exception of eating or drinking.
- Any student who regularly violates any of the health and safety expectations outlined by the school, will be sent home, and asked to receive instruction through a distance learning model only to protect the health and safety of both staff and students.
- Per the Governor's order, all teachers and school staff will have one COVID-19 home test available to them during the school year, and will have priority for COVID-19 tests throughout the year. Teachers and school employees are considered critical workers (similar to health care professionals) and PPE will be provided to them by the state of Minnesota as well.
- As critical workers, the children of teachers and school staff are able to get child care in their resident school district if their child is not in school and TCA is, for some reason.

### **Instructional Models and Schedules**

- All students will be assigned to either the blue group or the gold group at the beginning of the school year, in preparation for 50/50 hybrid models (Phases 3 and 4). Students will be grouped alphabetically to ensure all siblings are in the same group.
- During phases 1, 2 and the distance learning part of 3 students, will be meeting online through live instruction every day.
- Once students begin in person learning at the school building during Phases 3 and 4 (hybrid models) the blue group will meet two days a week in person for direct instruction (4 classes per day), while the gold group is learning from home working on activities posted on the classroom page for that class. Then the opposite will happen for a different two days that week where the gold group will be in person and the blue group will be online learning from home.
- During five day weeks, all students will have "live" online learning at home in between the two groups to allow for additional regular deep cleaning of the school building. On this day when all students are home learning, students will have all 8 classes for shorter periods of time. The last two hours of that day when all students are learning from home

will be dedicated to tutoring time, intervention time, individual student/teacher meetings, and extracurricular academic activities.

TCA understands the complexity of the hybrid model schedule and will be sending out a color-coded calendar for families and students to visually see when their student is at school and when they will be learning from home.

Below is a sample schedule for each of the models:

	<b>Day 1 (Mon)</b>	<b>Day 2 (Tue)</b>	<b>Day 3 (Wed)</b>	<b>Day 4 (Thur)</b>	<b>Day 5 (Fri)</b>
<b>Phase 1 - Full Distance</b>	Periods 1-4 All Students “Live” online with teacher	Periods 5-8 All Students “Live” online with teacher	Early Release Schedule Periods 1-8 (no advisory) All students “Live” online with teacher * Last 2 hours tutoring/intervention/extra support time	Periods 1-4 All Students “Live” online with teacher	Periods 5-8 All Students “Live” online with teacher
<b>Phase 2 - Full Distance w/ Supports</b>	Periods 1-4 All Students “Live” online with teacher	Periods 5-8 All Students “Live” online with teacher	Early Release Schedule Periods 1-8 (no advisory) All students “Live” online with teacher * Last 2 hours tutoring/intervention/extra support time	Periods 1-4 All Students “Live” online with teacher	Periods 5-8 All Students “Live” online with teacher
<b>Phase 3 - Safe Start Hybrid</b>  Grade Levels will	Some students still full distance others:	Some students still full distance others:	Early Release Schedule Periods 1-8 (no advisory) All students “Live” online	Some students still full distance others:	Some students still full distance others:

<p>begin this schedule gradually over 3-6 weeks. Prior to beginning this schedule grade level will remain in Phase 2 schedule</p>	<p>On-site periods 1-4 Blue Group</p> <p>Distance Learning periods 1-4 Gold Group</p>	<p>On-Site Periods 5-8 Blue Group</p> <p>Distance Learning periods 5-8 Gold Group</p>	<p>with teacher at home * Last 2 hours tutoring/intervention/extra support time</p>	<p>On-site periods 1-4 Gold Group</p> <p>Distance Learning periods 1-4 Blue Group</p>	<p>On-Site Periods 5-8 Gold Group</p> <p>Distance Learning periods 5-8 Blue Group</p>
<p><b>Phase 4 -</b> All Students in a 50/50 Hybrid Model</p>	<p>On-site periods 1-4 Blue Group</p> <p>Distance Learning periods 1-4 Gold Group</p>	<p>On-Site Periods 5-8 Blue Group</p> <p>Distance Learning periods 5-8 Gold Group</p>	<p>Early Release Schedule Periods 1-8 (no advisory) All students “Live” online with teacher at home * Last 2 hours tutoring/intervention/extra support time</p>	<p>On-site periods 1-4 Gold Group</p> <p>Distance Learning periods 1-4 Blue Group</p>	<p>On-Site Periods 5-8 Gold Group</p> <p>Distance Learning periods 5-8 Blue Group</p>
<p><b>Phase 5 -</b> All Students On Site</p>	<p>Periods 1-4</p>	<p>Periods 5-8</p>	<p>Early Release Schedule Periods 1-8 (no advisory) All students “Live” online with teacher at home * Last 2 hours tutoring/intervention/extra support time</p>	<p>Periods 1-4</p>	<p>Periods 5-8</p>

All models will be using Schoology. All assignments and activities will occur in the Schoology platform so that students and teachers can move easily from phase to phase without interruption in instruction.

TCA is also offering a full distance learning experience for any student who chooses to do it, regardless of the model. All classrooms are equipped with webcams to allow live streaming of in person instruction in the event that TCA is in phase 3-5 and the student wishes to remain learning through a distance learning model.

### **Start of the School Year Plan**

Twin Cities Academy has been monitoring the case rate per 10,000 people daily both at the county, city and neighborhood levels. Per MDE guidance TCA could begin the year in Phase 4, however in one week COVID 19 cases per 10,000 has increased from 16 to 20. With the current trend of increased cases, and with using an abundance of caution, **TCA is choosing to begin in Phase 2 (Full Distance w/ Supports)**. Students requiring extra support will be identified and school staff will contact families to arrange one or, in some special situations, two days for a student to be on site. This will be limited to only students needing additional academic or mental health support that cannot be accomplished reasonably in a distance learning setting. Groups will remain the same to develop a cohort and the cohorts will be even smaller than a normal 10-15 students we would expect in Phase 3 or 4. Transportation will be provided for these students to and from school.

TCA will be monitoring the metrics of COVID cases to 10,000 people (the guidance and the metric designed by state epidemiologists and the Minnesota Department of Education). It is TCA's intent to move to Phase 3 and 4 as soon as it appears cases are at a safe level at the city and neighborhood level, this will be when cases begin to level off or trend down. When TCA is able to move to Phase 3 or Phase 4, TCA will plan to move back to Phase 2 or even 1 if the COVID cases begin to increase again. The entire model is designed to allow for seamless transitions in response to the continuing uncertainty of the pandemic, and in a way to ensure TCA can provide the safest possible environment for learning.