

August 10, 2021;  
Update January 5, 2022

# RESPONSE LEVELS FOR ON-SITE LEARNING

Helping school districts determine health risks in  
relation to community spread of COVID-19

**ARKANSAS**

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# REMINDERS

- **178 six-hour instructional days of teacher-student interaction required (unless otherwise allowed by law/rule)**
- **On-site instruction required**
  - **Schools must be open daily for in-person learning according to schedules that meet minimum requirements of Standards for Accreditation.**
  - **School start date: A.C.A. § 6-10-106**

# REMINDERS

Per Ark. Code Ann. § 6-10-127, a district may apply for up to 10 days of Alternative Methods of Instruction, including without limitation virtual learning, on days when the district is closed due to exceptional or emergency circumstances such as a contagious disease outbreak, inclement weather or other acts of God, or a utility outage. **Plans must be submitted by Monday, August 16.**

## COM-21-145

- The district's AMI plan must demonstrate how teaching and learning will not be negatively impacted by the use of alternative methods of instruction.

# IMPORTANT NOTE

**Due to the emergency order that allowed for additional flexibility, last school year, districts could pivot to virtual/remote learning instead of using AMI days. For the 2021-2022 school year, however, the use of AMI days will be required when a school or district cannot deliver in-person school-wide or district-wide instruction in order to meet the 178 day requirement and “pivots”.**

**For calculation of AMI days, each campus, as defined by the school LEA, may have up to 10 AMI days per the approved plan submitted by the district.**



# AMI DAYS/CLOSURES

- There will be instances when the district will need to decide whether to close and make up the school day or utilize an AMI day. If a district cannot ensure *meaningful instruction*, the district should *not* use an AMI day.
- DESE will monitor the rate at which AMI days are necessary and communicate with superintendents in affected districts. If a district (or a school within a district) exceeds the 10 approved AMI days, the district will consult with DESE.

# AMI DAYS/CLOSURES

- **“Pivoting” or “Going virtual” is a closure to onsite instruction. When a campus closes to onsite instruction a district may use an AMI day (per the approved AMI plan) OR close and make up the day.**

# AMI DAYS/CLOSURES

## Districts should:

- Communicate with DESE POCs any questions
- Enter data in Insights
- Provide sufficient information to support closure in Insights data or comment boxes

*It is expected that the district is following its approved AMI plan when closing one or more of its campuses or the district/school will be required to make up days missed.*

# ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATION

**A district must adopt an academic calendar that includes five make-up days, in addition to the number of student-teacher interaction days required by the Standards for Accreditation. (Ark. Code Ann. § 6-10-106(f)). These make-up days can be used to replace instructional days lost due to exceptional or emergency circumstances resulting from a contagious disease outbreak, inclement weather, or other acts of God.**



# DETERMINING LEVEL OF RESPONSE

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# RESPONDING to COVID-19 OUTBREAKS



**STEP 1:** District P.O.C. contacts ADH School Hotline with questions, if needed.



**STEP 2:** P.O.C. compiles information regarding the positive case and probable close contacts and reports to ADH School Hotline via Redcap Survey Link



**STEP 3:** District notifies probable close contacts to self-quarantine per back-to-school guidelines from the last date of contact with the positive case

*Responses to COVID-19 should be as targeted as possible. Quarantines and isolations will require schools to implement flexible attendance policies for students and staff in order to lessen the interruption to teaching and learning.*

# RESPONDING to COVID-19 OUTBREAKS

School districts will use multiple sources of data to make decisions about onsite operations for the upcoming school year. **Level of responses will vary depending on the following:**

- Time of day school personnel receives notification of positive case(s)
- Time required to identify and notify probable close contacts
- Time needed to clean and disinfect affected areas
- Time to secure substitutes/availability of personnel to continue onsite operations
- Extent of affected area(s) (i.e. a classroom, lab, school bus, multiple confirmed cases)
- Evidence of spread within a school



# RESPONSE LEVELS

LIMITED RESPONSE: *Classroom or Grade-Level*  
Modification is Necessary

MODERATE RESPONSE: *School-Level*  
Modification is Necessary

CRITICAL RESPONSE: *District-wide*  
Modification is Necessary

# LIMITED RESPONSE: *Classroom or Grade-Level* Modification is Necessary

- Positive COVID-19 cases are confirmed in a school building but limited spread allows onsite operations to continue.
  - Students and staff quarantines may require classroom or grade-level pivots to remote learning using a blended learning approach.
- The percentage of staff and students affected will not alter the delivery of school-wide or district-wide on-site instruction and special services. *AMI day/closure not needed.*
- The school will make adjustments for teachers and students to stay connected and to provide meaningful instruction.

# LIMITED RESPONSE

## Recommendations for Continued On-site School Operations:

- Utilize blended learning for affected students and staff.
- Eliminate the use of lockers, cubbies, or any space that promotes congregating.
- Encourage the use of available safe outdoor spaces during instructional time when weather permits.
- Repurpose unused spaces or modify existing spaces to allow for maximum distancing of students/staff.
- Modify schedules to further decrease transitions.
- Encourage alternative modes of transportation for students who have options other than riding a bus.
- Use of masks/cloth face coverings.



# LIMITED RESPONSE: *Classroom or Grade-Level* Modification is Necessary



**STEP 1:** Superintendent supports P.O.C. and school staff to communicate with parents of affected students



**STEP 2:** Superintendent reports limited response modification in *Insights* reporting system



**STEP 3:** Superintendent does *not* have to consult with DESE/ADH; however, the superintendent may wish to talk to the assigned DESE P.O.C.

# MODERATE RESPONSE: *School-Level* Modification is Necessary

- **Positive COVID-19 cases are confirmed within the district with moderate spread that extends beyond a specific group of students or classroom. Within-school spread may be occurring.**
- **The percentage of staff and students affected within a school building may alter the delivery of on-site instruction and special services to the extent that a school closure to on-site instruction is warranted for in-person learning for a period of time.**
  - **AMI plans may be implemented if all students and staff pivot to remote learning.**
  - **The extent of school closure will be determined in collaboration with DESE/ADH.**
  - **Buildings may remain open for staff to continue teaching.**
  - **Limited on-site services may still be provided to smaller student groups.**

# MODERATE RESPONSE

## Recommendations for Continued School Operations:

- Enact AMI plans for the students and teachers within the building.
  - *The district must determine how to continue to provide options for **meaningful instruction** and continued services for students in the affected school, using on-site and remote learning options if implementing AMI.*
- Provide options for appropriate services onsite with smaller groupings of students and staff
- Utilize staff from other schools within the district to provide support, if applicable
- Reschedule or cancel affected extracurricular events, if applicable



# MODERATE RESPONSE: *School-Level* Modification is Necessary



**STEP 1:** Superintendent supports P.O.C. and school staff to communicate with parents of affected students.



**STEP 2:** Superintendent determines if AMI plans will be implemented for the school. Superintendent reports moderate response modification in *Insights* reporting system.



**STEP 3:** Superintendent *must* consult with DESE/ADH for closures that extend beyond the time needed for contract tracing, securing substitutes, and/or cleaning and disinfecting facilities.

# CRITICAL RESPONSE: *District-wide* Modification is Necessary

- Multiple COVID-19 cases are confirmed within the district due to active transmission within schools throughout the district (linked cases).
- The percentage of staff and students affected substantially disrupts the delivery of on-site instruction and special services to the extent a district-wide closure may be expected for a short or an extended period of time, *to be determined in consultation and collaboration with DESE and ADH.*
- Greater restrictions must be imposed.

# CRITICAL RESPONSE: *District-wide* Modification is Necessary

- AMI/school closure implemented
  - *AMI*: Pivot to remote learning for all students district-wide with AMI plans implemented for the delivery of *meaningful instruction*.
  - District-wide *closure*: May be required with make-up days scheduled for a later date if *meaningful instruction* cannot occur.
- Special services may still be provided on-site with limited numbers of students; however, it is anticipated that services may have to be provided remotely due to limited school personnel available.
- Postpone/cancel school-sanctioned events.



# CRITICAL RESPONSE: *District-wide* Modification is Necessary



**STEP 1:** Superintendent supports P.O.C. and staff to communicate with parents of affected students.



**STEP 2:** Superintendent determines if AMI plans/closure will be implemented for the district. Superintendent reports critical response modification in *Insights* reporting system.



**STEP 3:** Superintendent *must* consult with DESE/ADH for closures that extend beyond the time needed for contract tracing, securing substitutes, and/or cleaning and disinfecting facilities.



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