



Academy of Arts and Knowledge

Creating an environment in which all students can reach their full potential

4800 Wheaton Dr Fort Collins, CO 80525 Phone (970) 226-2800 Fax (970) 316-6745

Dear AAK Family,

During a meeting this month with charter school leaders, Governor Polis made an announcement of a more hopeful scenario for reopening schools, predicting the possibility of a cohort model with class sizes of 20-25 by the time school opened. He also acknowledged the importance of returning students to school on a full-schedule, full-attendance model. In an additional meeting with superintendents the following day, the Governor reiterated his expectation that schools will need to manage normal-sized classes with cohort strategies, hygiene, and personal responsibility, including a strong recommendation that all staff, and students, especially older students, wear masks.

Based on this information, as well as taking into account that we already have class sizes within this cohort range, we are evaluating the following model for immediate preparation and implementation in August. We will continue to closely consider the rationales and unknowns laid out in our framework as we prepare for August. In addition to this framework, we have back-up models that will be utilized in case of an outbreak or based on the changing county and state public health guidelines. These models include a hybrid schedule that would operate with two days of in-person learning with two days of remote learning with smaller cohorts, with Friday being a prep and plan day for teachers. We also have a framework to implement 100% remote learning if the need arises.

In the full-schedule, full-attendance model, we will serve our full population of students, but with more rigorous practices for personal hygiene and public health. Cleanliness and caution will remain high priorities, but we will depend more on personal responsibility and social modeling to keep us safe, rather than isolation or rigid rules. In the event that an outbreak occurs within a cohort, that cohort will transition to remote-learning for a period of time recommended by public health officials. There may be a need to transition, school-wide, to a hybrid schedule in case of a broad outbreak or other changing circumstances. If a more serious community outbreak makes on-campus learning non-viable again, we would return to 100% remote learning.

We are still reviewing guidance and developing our model to ensure safe practices for specials, recess, lunch and after school programming, so expect to see further clarification and opportunities for input as we develop options for those activities.

[This survey](#) is our attempt to be transparent with our community and attentive to community concerns and input. We are completely aware that any departure from conventional school operations will be disruptive for many students and families (including our AAK staff) so we are seeking input to help us create the best balance of supports and service. Thank you for helping us make the best plan possible as we transition through and beyond the COVID-19 pandemic.

Sincerely,
The AAK Administration



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Please read through the Model's 7 Elements and take the [survey](#).

As we have seen with this situation, this plan could change based on new information and guidance from the state or county.

Based on new guidance from Governor Jared Polis, AAK is planning on opening in the fall utilizing the full-schedule, full-attendance framework that is outlined in the model below.

Here are a few highlights:

- AAK will operate a full-schedule, five-day week.
- AAK will form cohorts of students who will learn and move together during the day with reduced contact to limit the incidence of exposure and possible spread of illness.
- AAK will expect staff to wear masks to the extent possible, and will recommend students to wear masks.
- AAK will implement health protocols for screening, detecting and responding to exposure and infection.
- AAK will offer a remote learning option for all families that can be utilized in the event of an outbreak, or for family preferences/health concerns.

We are now evaluating the following model for immediate preparation and implementation in August, closely considering the rationales and unknowns that you will see in greater detail in the model you see here. We will validate this work multiple times this summer to ensure plans remain aligned with current local and state public health and education guidance and orders. One of the benefits of being an independent, small community and class sizes, is that we have the ability to safely return with a full-schedule, full-attendance model. It also allows us the flexibility to pivot quickly to other models should the need arise in case of an outbreak or other changes in circumstances. We have backup models of further reduced class sizes and an alternating day schedule if these scenarios arise.

ELEMENT 1

- AAK will operate a full-schedule, five-day week.

RATIONALE

- Recent statements from Governor Polis indicate that upcoming guidance from the state level will permit class sizes of 25 or more, consistent with realistic protocols for distancing, hygiene, and personal responsibility.



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UNKNOWNNS

- How will we adjust class schedules to reduce student mobility throughout the day?
 - How will we support individual students who need specialized accommodations to access learning in our new model?
-

ELEMENT 2

- AAK will form cohorts of students who will learn and move together during the day. We will reduce contact between cohorts to reduce the incidence of exposure and possible transmission.

RATIONAL

- Scheduling students in cohorts will reduce the degree of contact and minimize the need for contact tracing if a student or staff member is infected.
- Reduced contact through social distancing has coincided with reduced transmission rates across many populations.

UNKNOWNNS

- How will we establish cohorts as students arrive at school and release cohorts at the end of the day?
-

ELEMENT 3

- AAK will maintain the current school day schedule--not extending or shortening the schedule, including maintaining our Extended Day hours.

RATIONALE

- Even with larger class sizes and a more normalized schedule, the new model will be challenging to implement and manage.
- Remaining with the standard schedule will maintain a known, sustainable model.

UNKNOWNNS

- How will a cohorted model of student presence affect the transfer time between classes?
-



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ELEMENT 4

- AAK will expect staff to wear masks to the extent possible, and will recommend students to wear masks.

RATIONALE

- Current best recommendations from CDE and health agencies include staff wearing masks.
- Recommending that students wear masks sets a cautious standard, without creating a rigid requirement that is probably unenforceable and disruptive.

UNKNOWNNS

- How will individual workforce members respond to the expectation to wear masks?
- Will an open culture for student mask-wearing create tension or conflict?
- How will we implement exceptions for staff members who can not wear a mask?

ELEMENT 5

- AAK will implement health protocols for screening, detecting and responding to exposure and infection.

RATIONALE

- Screening for symptoms such as elevated temperatures, or contact tracing after exposure to infected individuals provides an additional layer of protection to students, parents, and staff.

UNKNOWNNS

- How will we manage the logistics of regular screening?
- Will we need additional personnel or equipment to implement our health protocols?

ELEMENT 6

- AAK will operate near-normal Extended Day Programming following the cohort model as closely as possible.

RATIONALE

- Extended Day is an important part of our program. Similar cohorts as seen during the regular school hour will help limit transmission and allow for contact tracing after exposure.



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UNKNOWNNS

- How will sign up for Extended Day change in order to appropriately staff for the cohort model?
- How will the decrease in flexibility for parents affect their ability to utilize the program?

ELEMENT 7

- AAK will operate a full-scale food service adapted to a grab-and-go model rather than a conventional lunchroom with large-quantity serving lines.

RATIONALE

- Providing a mobile meal service, either through pickup or delivery of packaged meals, will support the cohort model for student learning and mobility.

UNKNOWNNS

- How will lunch times be staffed to allow teachers time for breaks throughout the day?

ELEMENT 8

- AAK will offer online learning only by parent choice.

RATIONALE

- We expect that there will be families who are not ready or able to go back to school, even if health conditions allow for in-person education in some form.
- In a 100 percent remote education environment, students can take classes online and be connected to their original school communities.
- The bonds our students have with their teachers, classmates, and staff are deeply important – especially during these difficult times.

UNKNOWNNS

- What additional online learning platforms and resources will need to be implemented?

AAK: Return to School School Preferences Survey

This survey is our attempt to be transparent with our community and attentive to community concerns and input. We are completely aware that any departure from conventional school operations will be disruptive for many students and families (including our AAK staff) so we are seeking input to help us create the best balance of supports and service. Thank you for helping us make the best plan possible as we transition through and beyond the COVID pandemic.

Please take the survey here: <https://survey.sogosurvey.com/r/3zZcN1>