



# MAINLAND REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL

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## Increasing In-Person Instruction at Mainland Regional High School Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) Regarding **SCHEDULE CHANGES COMMENCING MARCH 8, 2021**

February 23, 2021

### 1. When will the TRANSITIONAL SCHEDULE by alternating cohorts (A/B) begin?

A new TRANSITIONAL SCHEDULE by alternating cohorts (A/B) will begin on **Monday, March 8, 2021** with Cohort A students arriving for in-person classes by 8:00 AM. Cohort B and virtual students will attend the same classes remotely online based on the schedule below.

On **Tuesday, March 9, 2021**, Cohort B students will come into the High School to attend their classes in-person while Virtual and Cohort A students will attend the same classes remotely online based on the schedule below. Cohort A and B students attend their classes in-person at the High School every other day based on assigned cohort.

The full day schedule by alternating cohorts repeats after the 8<sup>th</sup> day. Cohort A and B students will be in attendance at the High School for in-person instruction four (4) days during the eight (8) day cycle. In addition, Cohort A, B and virtual students will simultaneously attend each class, whether remotely or in-person, for a total of six (6) meetings in the eight (8) day cycle.

### TRANSITIONAL SCHEDULE w/ 6 Periods & Daily MTSS *9<sup>th</sup> Period Adjustment for Seniors*

TIME	MIN	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7	Day 8
		COHORT A Cohort B (Virtual) Cohort V (Virtual)	COHORT B Cohort A (Virtual) Cohort V (Virtual)	COHORT A Cohort B (Virtual) Cohort V (Virtual)	COHORT B Cohort A (Virtual) Cohort V (Virtual)	COHORT A Cohort B (Virtual) Cohort V (Virtual)	COHORT B Cohort A (Virtual) Cohort V (Virtual)	COHORT A Cohort B (Virtual) Cohort V (Virtual)	COHORT B Cohort A (Virtual) Cohort V (Virtual)
8:00AM – 8:45 AM <i>Start of School Day for Students</i>	45	1	1	4	4	3	3	2	2
8:49 AM – 9:34 AM	45	2	2	1	1	4	4	3	3
9:38 AM – 10:23 AM	45	3	3	2	2	1	1	4	4
10:23 AM – 10:33 AM	10	Screen Break	Screen Break	Screen Break	Screen Break	Screen Break	Screen Break	Screen Break	Screen Break
10:37 AM – 11:22 AM	45	6	6	6	6	6	6	7	7
11:26 AM – 12:11 PM	45	7	7	7	7	8	8	8	8
12:15 PM – 1:00 PM	45	8	8	9	9	9	9	9	9
1:00 PM – 1:30 PM <i>Dismissal</i>	50	Grab & Go Lunch	Grab & Go Lunch	Grab & Go Lunch	Grab & Go Lunch	Grab & Go Lunch	Grab & Go Lunch	Grab & Go Lunch	Grab & Go Lunch
1:30 PM – 2:05 PM	35	MTSS 123	MTSS 123	MTSS 412	MTSS 412	MTSS 341	MTSS 341	MTSS 234	MTSS 234
2:05 PM – 2:40 PM	35	MTSS 678	MTSS 678	MTSS 679	MTSS 679	MTSS 896	MTSS 896	MTSS 789	MTSS 789
Drop Periods		49	49	38	38	27	27	16	16



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## 2. How does the TRANSITIONAL SCHEDULE with alternating cohorts (A/B) work?

Students will attend school based on their assigned cohort (A or B) every other day. For example, on Day 1, Cohort A students will attend classes in-person at the High School, while Cohort B and 100% Virtual students will attend the same class remotely online using Microsoft Teams. ALL students will be attending their classes either virtually or in-person every day. On Day 2, Cohort B students will attend classes in-person at the High School, while Cohort A and 100% Virtual students will attend the same class remotely online using Microsoft Teams.

The TRANSITIONAL SCHEDULE increases instructional time ensuring all students receive approximately 270 minutes of instruction per day and per class over the eight (8) day cycle. This is a significant increase in instructional time from the District's current HYBRID and VIRTUAL instructional schedules. Increasing students' opportunity to attend classes either in-person or remotely online at specific times based on the schedule provides a consistent routine that will benefit students' social and emotional well-being.

## 3. Why is the District implementing a TRANSITIONAL SCHEDULE in March 2021 as opposed to a full day schedule with cohorts? When can we expect to return to a FULL DAY instructional schedule?

The District is implementing a TRANSITIONAL SCHEDULE in March 2021 to (1) monitor potential exposure within the High School due to the increase from students attending two days a week of in-person instruction to five days a week, (2) prepare for an increase in completely virtual students switching to in-person learning and integrating them into the in-person classrooms, (3) address the needs and concerns of students (currently 500+) that have chosen a completely virtual instructional schedule, (4) provide additional time for the revamping of meal distribution in our communities, (5) prepare students for a gradual, but substantial, increase in instructional time per day and week without overwhelming students, (6) prepare, approve, and train additional substitutes in the event of potential faculty and staff quarantines or other staffing issues, and (7) limit eating and unmasked time in the High School to decrease possibility of exposure, which the District will monitor.

**The District is planning to implement a FULL DAY SCHEDULE by alternating cohorts by the beginning of the 4<sup>th</sup> marking period** as long as the numbers of confirmed cases continue to trend downward and Atlantic County is not in the VERY HIGH risk level according to the State, which has not occurred this year. Throughout the winter, Atlantic County was in the HIGH risk level but has currently (2/8/2021) dropped into the MODERATE risk level.

Information regarding the **FULL DAY schedule by alternating cohorts** will be released prior to Spring Break in April 2020.

## 4. What are MTSS (Multi-Tiered System of Support) periods and why are they in the instructional schedule?

MTSS periods are built-in, virtual opportunities for students to meet with their teachers for extra help, to make-up assignments, and prepare for assessments. In addition, MTSS periods may be utilized by case managers and guidance counselors to meet virtually with students. MTSS periods are for all students but also provide virtual students with additional access to teachers in the event an issue



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arises. For example, a student would be able to meet with their teacher at the end of each day during the designated MTSS period. MTSS 123 is for assistance/support in periods 1, 2, or 3 from 1:30 PM to 2:05 PM on Day 1 and MTSS 678 is for assistance/support in periods 6, 7, or 8 from 2:05 PM to 2:40 PM on Day 1.

MTSS period support will be provided to students virtually in most instances. Students will not be required to participate in an MTSS period unless a teacher specifically schedules an appointment to meet with a student or a group of students. Students seeking assistance or support are also encouraged to set up appointments to meet with their teachers during the MTSS periods. In addition, some teachers may choose to hold review sessions with students prior to Advanced Placement Exams or other important assessments during the MTSS periods.

**5. I am presently a student with a completely virtual instructional schedule, when and how can I transition to in-person instruction?**

Students that want to switch to the TRANSITIONAL SCHEDULE from the virtual instructional schedule should contact their case manager or guidance counselor to request the change as soon as possible. However, you may request a change at any time before the end of the school year. Please understand that schedule changes may take up to week depending on the number of student requests the District receives. A return to the hybrid instructional model from an all-virtual schedule may also require alterations to a student's existing schedule or cohort assignment. Students wishing to change from a virtual instructional schedule will receive an email notification regarding their return to school date for in-person instruction.

**6. Will I be able to remain on a virtual instructional schedule for the remainder of the year?**

Students that have chosen a completely virtual instructional schedule may remain completely virtual until the end of this school year, but they will be expected to attend all classes remotely online Monday through Friday by assigned class time/period.

**7. I was under the impression that new content was not being covered on in-person instructional days, will this change?**

Moving forward, new content may be covered during any instructional day. Teachers will be developing lessons that introduce and apply new content as well as reviewing existing course content to ensure student understanding and comprehension during each class meeting. Therefore, it is imperative that students attend all scheduled class meetings and follow up with their teachers as necessary if they miss a class.

**8. Will I still be completing independent (asynchronous) assignments on days I am not in the High School for in-person instruction?**

Students are required to attend all classes, either in-person based on their assigned cohort (A/B) or virtually every day, based on the times delineated in the revised TRANSITIONAL SCHEDULE contained within this FAQ. As prior to the pandemic, students may be assigned independent assignments including homework and projects on any instructional day.



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- 9. My family and I have been watching COVID-19 trends and we are concerned that there will be days that I will feel uncomfortable attending classes in-person even though my assigned cohort is scheduled to be in the High School. Can I attend my classes remotely online even though I was supposed to be in-person at the High School?**

Students may choose to attend classes remotely online if they do not come into the High School. Students that attend their classes remotely online, even though they were scheduled to be in-person based on their assigned cohort (A/B), will be marked present for attendance, if they attend their classes remotely online.

- 10. I have been attending in-person at Mainland Regional High School, will my schedule change?**

Students that have been attending in-person on Thursdays or Friday will not have their schedule changed. The only difference is that you will be attending in-person at the High School more frequently during the eight (8) day cycle.

- 11. Why did the District wait until March to increase in-person instructional opportunities for students?**

The District has monitored risk index levels as well as the number of confirmed cases and self-quarantines not only in our communities, but also those related to students, faculty, and staff at the High School since September 2020. On January 24, 2021, Atlantic County reported a high of 400+ confirmed COVID-19 cases which has steadily decreased throughout February 2021. In addition, the District's Health Advisory Committee recommended monitoring COVID-19 cases through the month of February while preparing plans for an increase of in-person instruction beginning in March 2021 if the number of confirmed cases continued to decline and trend downward.

- 12. Why does the District believe it is appropriate to increase in-person instruction currently?**

The District believes it is appropriate to increase in-person instruction currently because the number of confirmed cases in Atlantic County and in our communities continues to decrease and trend downward. In addition, transmission rates have also declined, and the CDC has recently released guidance regarding the spread of COVID-19 within schools and recommended mitigation measures that the District has already implemented. Our planned return also reflects the recommendations of the District's Health Advisory Committee.

- 13. Why are students attending school in-person based on alternating cohorts and not having all students attend every day like local private and religious schools?**

Mainland Regional High School currently has an enrollment of over 1260 students, unlike local religious and private schools, which have significantly less students enrolled (400-700 students). In addition, Mainland Regional, like all public schools, is required to have a certified teacher in each classroom, which is not necessarily required at private and religious institutions.

Furthermore, many public High Schools with more than 1000 students enrolled have implemented instructional schedules based on alternating cohorts. In addition, the High School's proposed TRANSITIONAL SCHEDULE mirrors or exceeds the minutes of instruction and support students are



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provided in many High Schools throughout the county and state. The FULL DAY schedule that is planned for April 2021 will further increase instructional time.

We are aware that several of our sending districts are planning for each student to attend school in-person five days per week. Unlike elementary and middle schools, Mainland Regional offers more than 200 different classes, including required classes and electives. Students do not remain in one classroom with “specials” being taught in that classroom. Given the size of our student body, the size of our facility, and the number of courses offered, we simply cannot accommodate every student being in school in-person five days per week and still comply with the required safety measures. We are committed to maintaining the breadth of our academic programs despite the pandemic and offering significant instructional time for all students.

**14. Is there a CONTINGENCY schedule in the event of a school closure due to the pandemic or inclement weather?**

In the event of a school closure, ALL students would follow the TRANSITIONAL or FULL DAY schedule by attending their classes remotely online.

**15. I have a sport or co-curricular activity afterschool, but my day ends at 1:00 PM (TRANSITIONAL SCHEDULE) and I do not have a ride home between the end of the school day and the beginning of my afterschool sport or activity. What should I do?**

Students who wish to remain in school during this time will report to the cafeteria to eat their lunch and complete schoolwork from 1:00 PM to 2:46 PM or schedule extra help during the MTSS period with a teacher. Students that remain at the High School after 1:00 PM for sports and activities may not be in the building unsupervised and MUST report to the cafeteria. Students and their parents/guardians are encouraged to plan for this time in advance of the beginning of the TRANSITIONAL SCHEDULE.

**16. Can I leave period 9 if I have Senior Privilege?**

Students that are assigned Senior Privilege may leave prior to period 9, but they will not be permitted to re-enter the high school until after dismissal (1:00 PM) and only if they have a scheduled after-school activity. Students exercising their Senior Privilege may not remain in the High School unsupervised (inside or outside).

**17. Will I be able to eat a snack or have a drink during the school day from 8:00 AM to 1:00 PM?**

Students are encouraged to eat a healthy breakfast before arriving at school. Students may bring water bottles or other snacks to their classroom that do not disrupt the learning environment due to their odor, messiness, or loudness (super crunchy). Refrigerators and microwaves are not available to students. In addition, students are required to clean and disinfect their desks or work areas after eating or drinking and dispose of all trash. Students will be provided a grab and go lunch at 1:00 (dismissal) to eat at home. The grab and go lunch will include 2 days of lunch and breakfast meals. All students must remain masked when not eating or drinking.



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Students will be able to eat a snack during the time allotted for the “screen break” from 10:23 AM to 10:33 AM. Students are encouraged to bring water with them to the High School and may drink the water during class as long as their masks are replaced immediately after taking a drink.

## 18. Will the bussing schedule change?

At this time, the current bussing schedule will not change, but may be adjusted in the future due to the number of bussed students attending school for in-person instruction.

## 19. What additional safety measures are in place to mitigate the spread of COVID-19?

Mainland Regional High School will continue to require masking, hand washing/sanitizing, and social distancing through the end of the school year. Classroom desks are spaced six (6) feet apart with hand sanitizer, disinfecting wipes, and gloves available in all instructional areas. Plexiglass barriers will be available in each classroom for students that would feel more comfortable using one despite being socially distanced. Unfortunately, students will not be permitted to use their lockers.

## 20. What happens if a student in one of my in-person classes is diagnosed with a confirmed case of COVID-19?

If a student in one of your in-person classes is diagnosed with a confirmed case of COVID-19, the High School’s nurses will begin contact tracing to see if anyone was in “close contact” with the student that has the confirmed case of COVID-19. If a student(s), staff or faculty member(s) was in “close contact,” within 6 feet for a cumulative 15 minutes or more, those students, staff, or faculty would be directed to self-quarantine based on the latest guidance from the New Jersey and Atlantic County Departments of Health.