

American Preparatory Academy Fall 2020 Reopening Plan—General Overview

American Preparatory Academy (APA) has engaged in a lengthy process of research, discussion, and collaboration with parents, staff members, and administrators regarding COVID19 and its impact on the schools opening this fall. We have considered thousands of parent comments and have solicited and received a great deal of input from teachers and staff members. Additionally, the Utah State Board of Education and staff, as well as the Governor’s office, have provided requirements and recommendations to schools that we have considered as we make our plan to open school.

American Prep leaders agree that the following principles will guide our plans and our actions:

1. Students need to be in school if it is at all possible. Issues of student academic loss, student mental health deterioration, and lack of supervision for students as parents return to work, are real and significant factors which support the need for students to be in school.
2. Students are not generally considered high-risk individuals for COVID19.
3. Staff members are at higher risk than our students, and all reasonable means by which we can protect our staff members should be implemented, including requiring mask or shield wearing of all individuals in our buildings.
4. There are many unknowns and constant change in the current circumstances. We will endeavor to study, consider, discuss and debate when making decisions that may have an impact on our staff members’ and students’ lives. We will support the best efforts of all stakeholders in this process, and we realize there may not be clear answers or strong evidence for or against a particular decision. We will act in good faith to support the decisions made and be willing to support when information changes and there is a need for adjustments to the plan.

Plan Goal: To maintain our mission of excellence in academics and character development, while simultaneously doing all we can to promote student, staff, and family health and safety.

This fall, APA will offer several options to parents. Each option is described below, first for elementary (grades K-6) and then for secondary (grades 7-12).

ELEMENTARY PROGRAMS – FALL 2020

For students in grades K-6, APA will offer 2 options:

1. On-Campus Program

- a. Students will attend school on the regular school calendar and schedule
- b. Students and staff will wear masks and/or shields
- c. The full APA academic program will be provided, including small-group classes, which provide for less people together for a significant portion of the day (2.5 hours)
- d. Students will eat lunch in classrooms
- e. No large-group assemblies will be held

- f. Symptom checking will be conducted by families each morning
- g. Symptom checking will be conducted randomly by staff each day
- h. Desks or seats will be separated wherever possible
- i. Transition schedules will be altered to decrease the number of students in the hallway at any given time
- j. Students will be taught the importance of mask wearing, social distancing, and keeping their hands to themselves and their own belongings
- k. Increased hand washing and hand sanitizing will be encouraged, planned, and supervised
- l. Increased sanitizing of desks, doorknobs, and other surfaces

2. Off-Campus Program

- a. Students will not come to the campus for school
- b. Students will be assigned to an Off-Campus Program Teacher
- c. Students will need access to a computer, with internet access, for approximately 2-3 hours per day
- d. Courses will include Reading, Mathematics, Science, History, and Literature Studies
- e. Parents will need to come to the school prior to the beginning of the term to pick up the student materials they will need
- f. Parents will need to assist young children with their schoolwork daily
- g. When a student begins any term enrolled in the Off-Campus Program, they will remain in that program for the length of the term. Transfers to the on-campus program will be made at term-end
- h. The Off-Campus Program is not the same Learning From Home (LFH) program we provided during the school shut-down last March-May. See FAQ for more information.

SECONDARY PROGRAMS – FALL 2020

For students in grades 7-12, APA will offer 3 options:

1. On-Campus Program

- a. Students will attend on the regular school calendar. School hours may be adjusted slightly depending upon the campus.
- b. For the beginning of the year, and for an undetermined length of time, the school schedule will change to a full-block schedule (A/B days), where on A days students have periods 1-4, and on B days students have periods 5-8. Please note: This is NOT an attendance schedule where students only attend on either A or B days. Students attend school every school day.
- c. Students and staff will wear masks and/or shields
- d. The full APA academic program will be provided
- e. Extra-curricular activities will be provided as allowed by UHSAA rules and state guidance. Events will be live streamed as possible; spectators will be limited for most activities

- f. Students will carry backpacks instead of using lockers, except as needed on a case-by-case basis
- g. 3 lunch periods will be held to decrease the number of students at lunch together
- h. No large-group assemblies will be held
- i. Symptom checking will be conducted by families each morning
- j. Symptom checking will be conducted by first-period teachers each day
- k. Desks or seats will be separated as far as possible
- l. There will be fewer transitions each day due to the block schedule
- m. Hand sanitizing upon entry and exit of classes
- n. Frequent hand washing encouraged
- o. Frequent sanitizing of desks, doorknobs, and other surfaces

2. Off-Campus Live Stream Program—Grades 7-12

- a. Students will not come to the campus
- b. Students will be given a course schedule that will align with the on-campus schedule
- c. School will be conducted on a full A/B block schedule, so students will have 4 classes per day, periods 1-4 one day and periods 5-8 the next day
- d. Students will need a computer, internet access, printer, and supplies and should prepare to be “in school” for 6-7 hours per day
- e. Students will log in to attend classes being conducted at the campus, according to their schedule, each day (live)
- f. Parents will need to come to the campus to pick up materials for the term prior to the term beginning

3. Independent Study (IS)—BYU/Brain Honey—Grades 7-12

- a. Student registers and enrolls in courses required for graduation
- b. APA pays the student costs
- c. Student remains enrolled at APA but does not come to campus
- d. Student must remain enrolled in the IS program until they have completed their coursework, which is provided by semester. First return opportunity to campus would be January 2021.

American Preparatory Academy
Fall 2020 Plan FAQ—Frequently Asked Questions

1. Why do the students and staff members have to wear masks?

Answer: The Governor has mandated mask use in all Utah K-12 schools.

2. Will I be able to get my child excused from the mask-wearing requirement?

Answer: Due to our strong commitment to ensure we are doing absolutely everything possible to safeguard the health and lives of our staff members, **APA’s goal is to have 100% compliance on mask wearing in our schools.** We feel this is entirely achievable and is important to keep our staff safe. Parents who do not wish for their child to wear a mask to school, or who feel their child has an extenuating circumstance that would limit their ability to wear a mask, are encouraged to choose the Off-Campus Program so that our staff can be protected to the maximum extent possible.

We recognize there is significant diversity of opinions among our parents with regard to the effectiveness or advisability of mask wearing. We have spent many hours researching, discussing, and debating the issue of masks. Now that the Governor has mandated masks in schools, we feel it important to state that we intend to fully comply with his directive, regardless of the strong personal feelings of our parents and staff members who are opposed to mandated mask wearing.

We realize our position likely disappoints and even angers some of our parents. It may be helpful to know that some (maybe even “many”) of our administrators were hoping their children would not have to wear masks when they returned to school and don’t personally support mandated masks. We ALL wish we were not in a situation where mask wearing is necessary; however, we find ourselves with the choice of following the mandate and hopefully being able to open and remain open (due to low case counts), or not following the mandate and not being able to return to school or being shut down due to high case counts.

One thing we are unanimous about is our hope that we can be in school this fall with your children. Use of masks is a reality we have had to face, and we have decided to embrace it to increase our chances of having that hope realized.

We value the freedom we all enjoy to have opinions, and we respect that parents have theirs regarding the use of masks. We hope you will understand our position that if masks can help reduce TO ANY DEGREE the number of COVID19 infections that occur among our staff, we feel it is well worth the effort to set a standard of 100% mask wearing at our schools—because we are 100% committed to doing all we can to help keep our staff members safe and healthy.

3. Can my child wear a face shield instead of a mask?

Answer: Yes. Face shields are acceptable alternatives for masks, and we encourage their use. Teaching and learning will be facilitated by the use of face shields when possible so that mouths and expressions can be seen by teachers and students. However, multi-layer cloth masks provide

greater protection than face shields, and shields are not safe on the playground so we encourage students who wish to use a shield during class to have a face mask to switch to during appropriate times during the day.

To further safeguard our staff members, we will be encouraging them to use BOTH a shield and face mask when they are assisting individual students, monitoring in the classroom, etc.

4. Can I enroll in the Off-Campus Program and then switch to the On-Campus Program?

Answer: Yes; however, enrollment switches will happen at the end of the school term.

5. Can I enroll in the On-Campus Program and then switch to the Off-Campus Program?

Answer: Yes. These enrollment switches can happen at any time the parents decide they would prefer to have their child in the Off-Campus Program.

6. Is the elementary Off-Campus Program (OCP) the same as the “Learning From Home” (LFH) program we participated in last spring?

Answer: No. In the Off-Campus Program, each elementary student will be enrolled in the “classroom” of an OCP teacher, who will ensure that the student’s reading and math lessons are loaded for the student to watch and complete each day at home, and who also will be available for questions from students or parents. In the OCP, Science and History packets and access to Science and History materials online will be given to the students to assist them in completing their unit packets. Literature will consist of independent reading assignments. Students will complete their homework, and parents will be given the answer keys to check the homework. Students will take tests for grades.

We appreciate the many parents who requested that we continue the LFH program we instituted last spring. We agree our teachers did a fantastic job of delivering a great education under the circumstances. Our analysis of the program resulted in clear findings that the LFH program is unsustainable for many reasons, including the fact that teachers were required to work excessive hours to make the program successful. Many parents also reported that the program was too intense and time consuming for their children.

7. What happens if there is a case of COVID19 among a student or staff member at the school?

Answer: With the current rates of transmission in Utah, and with 5500 students and 750 staff members at APA, we anticipate this will happen, and we have a plan in place for when it does. Parents will be notified of any positive cases at the school. The case will be reported to the Utah Department of Health (UDOH), and the UDOH will advise the school with regard to any required closures—for example, of a class or a campus.

8. Why does the secondary plan say “at the beginning of the year and for an undetermined period of time” there will be a block schedule?

Answer: Running a “temporary” block schedule at the beginning of the year provides us with several advantages:

- It gives teachers time to figure out the logistics related to “live from home” classes they will be streaming.
- Teachers can establish and refine procedures for sanitizing classrooms, using the saved transition time for training students on those procedures.
- The first week or two of school will be very informative on a campus, district, and state level. We will quickly see how the Utah Department of Health handles cases of COVID in a school setting whether the case be a student or teacher, how outbreaks are handled, how common cases become, and if we have to close classes or campuses.

We anticipate carefully re-evaluating the block schedule, and we are open to going back to the full schedule if and when it is advisable.

9. Why would the block schedule be temporary? Why would secondary school staff want to go back to a “regular” schedule (modified block) as soon as possible?

Answer: APA teachers are committed to the modified block because our data shows that we are able to accomplish significantly more academic work on a modified block schedule. Student attention spans are limited—especially for 7th and 8th graders—and a 90-minute class is not as effective as a 48-minute class.

In our discussions, teachers overwhelmingly expressed they would prefer to teach on the modified block schedule, but they understood the need to perhaps go to a block schedule temporarily for safety reasons, and they are supportive of that.

Although it may seem to be the case that spending time with only 90-120 students a day in 4-block classes as opposed to 210 students each day in the modified block schedule would be safer for staff members, considering that the teachers will be spending time with those other students within the next 24 hours helps us see that perhaps it isn’t a foregone conclusion that a block schedule is appreciably “safer”. We will continue to monitor the block schedule situation and make changes as they become appropriate.