

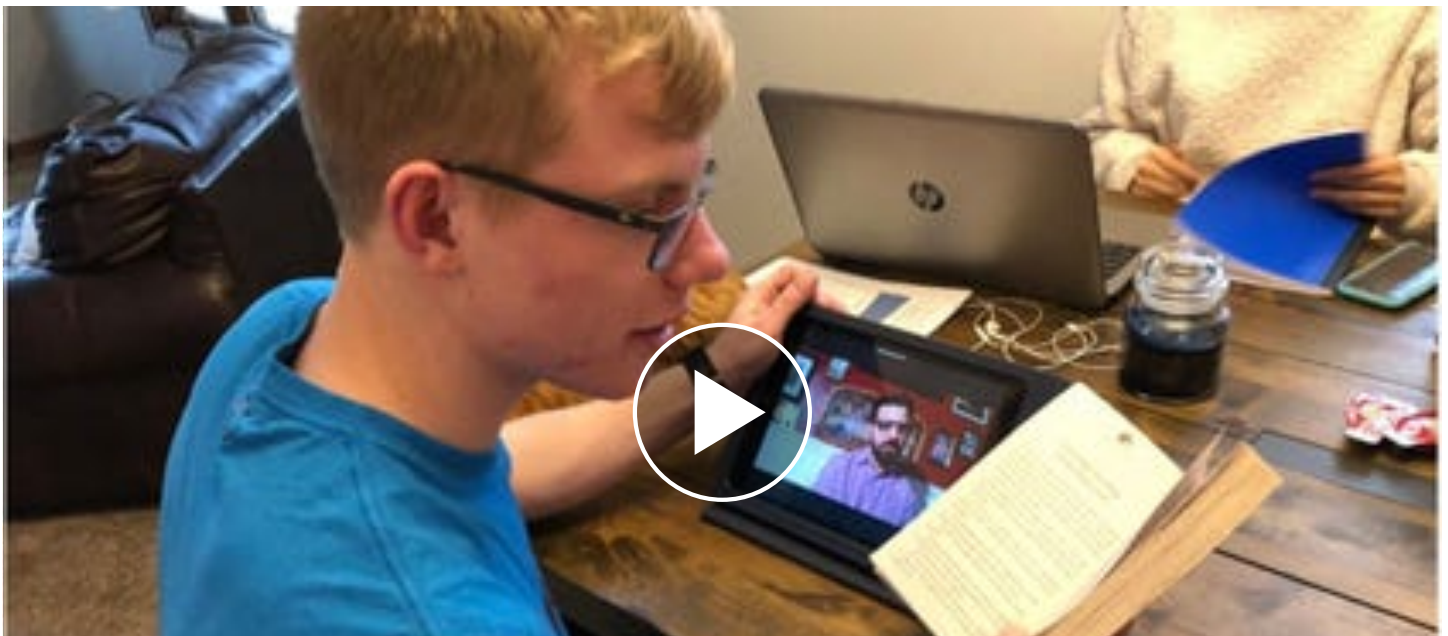


**UP NEXT:**  
State releases guidance for reopening school



all? Answers to

ARIKA HERRON | INDIANAPOLIS STAR | 12 hours ago



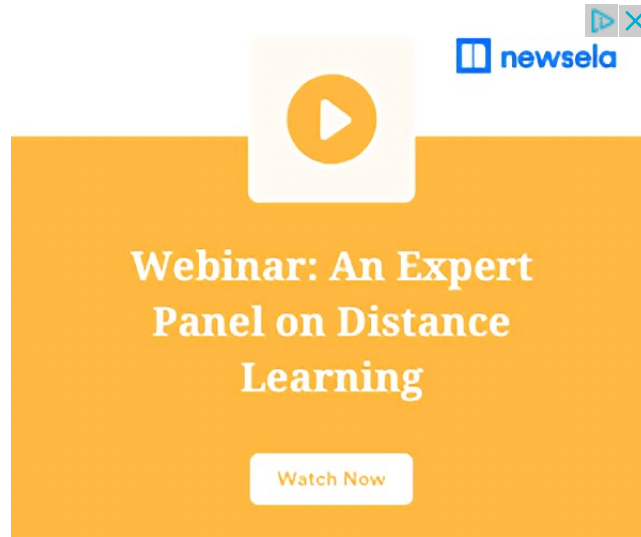
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More Indiana schools are using eLearning in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. Here's some advice to make it a success for students, teachers and parents.

DWIGHT ADAMS, DWIGHT.ADAMS@INDYSTAR.COM

Schools can safely reopen, with a number of policy and practice changes, [according to new guidance released by the Indiana Department of Education.](#)



The guidance, released in 38-page document Friday, makes a series of recommendations to schools but does not mandate any policy changes. Instead, it details a number of measures for school leaders to consider, while leaving final decisions up to the schools.

### **As state prepares to reopen schools: Some Hoosiers consider keeping kids home in the fall**

Here are some of the answers to key questions about what school will look like when it reopens.

#### **Will schools reopen?**

Yes. Schools can reopen in July and most have said they're planning to reopen their buildings for the 2020-21 school year. Most schools start the year in late July or early August.

#### **What happens if someone in the school tests positive for the coronavirus?**

Schools should be prepared to respond to coronavirus cases when they occur in their facilities. This will require each school to develop a mandatory reporting system for all teachers, administrators, staff and students (parents/guardians) to report any documented positive cases of coronavirus in their school.



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Any student, teacher, administrator or staff who is symptomatic for infection should stay home and consult their primary care provider or seek testing.

Students lean against the front seat of a school bus.

ROBERT SCHEER/INDYSTAR

## **Can students still ride the bus?**

That will depend on each individual school district but the likely answer is yes. The state is recommending buses be cleaned more frequently and thoroughly than in years past and drivers wear masks.

It also recommends that drivers be assigned to a single bus, students be assigned to a single bus and a specific seat and students be limited to one route.

Districts should consider adding additional bus stops and routes and consider social distancing on the bus.

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## **Will schools still serve lunch?**

Yes, but the state is encouraging schools to serve those meals in classrooms instead of cafeterias and to rely on bagged or boxed meals with all the necessary utensils and condiments inside the package.

Self-serve food items should be eliminated, according to the guidance, and sneeze guards should be installed in serving lines.

## **How will schools keep kids socially distanced in classrooms?**

The state makes several suggestions for how to create socially-distanced classrooms:

- Schedule specified groups of students to attend in-person school on alternate days or half days to minimize the number of students in the building. Those students not attending in-person should be expected to engage in remote/continuous learning.
- Consider year-round schooling with alternating breaks to minimize the numbers of students in the building at any time.
- Provide in-person instruction to elementary students and increase distance learning opportunities for secondary grade levels.
- Offer both in-person and remote instruction.

### **What about in hallways, the bathrooms or at recess?**

The state is recommending that schools close playgrounds and other communal spaces, like cafeterias. If schools do allow for recess, they should alternate times to limit the number of students on the playground and allow time to disinfect equipment between uses.



Another suggestion is to keep students in the same classroom throughout the day to limit time in hallways and minimize the number of students coming into contact with high-touch surfaces.

Schools should also consider staggering drop-off and pick-up times and the times that classes are released to limit the number of students in hallways at any one time.

Restroom breaks should be scheduled to avoid crowding, according to the guidance.

## **When will school sports and extracurriculars start back up?**

The state has broken extracurricular reentry into three phases, the first of which starts July 6.

Read more about the phases [here](#).

## **Will people have to wear masks?**

That will depend on each individual school district. The state is recommending face coverings for students, teachers and other staff but is not mandating it.

## **What is the state requiring of schools?**

The Indiana Department of Education released a 38-page document with considerations, suggestions and recommendations but none of those are mandatory.

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