

July 22, 2020

Dear Westville School District Parents and School Community,

With the release of the district plan for re-opening schools there have been good follow-up questions. Here is a list of some of the most frequently asked questions and related answers for our plan to return to school.

At registration parents are going to be asked to select a delivery model (in-person or remote) that will work best for their son/daughter. How long will students be committed to their selection and will there be a process to switch back and forth?

Generally speaking, students will NOT be allowed to switch-back and forth within the semester. At registration every student will have an opportunity to select either an in-person delivery model or a remote learning delivery model for instruction. Regardless of which model a student selects, the learning expectations will be the same. Students who select remote learning will have a short window of time (about one week) to confirm that remote learning will work for their situation. Once a student has selected remote learning and that grace period has expired that student will remain with that delivery model through the end of the semester. Students who start out selecting in-person learning, WILL have an option to crossover into remote learning if circumstances arise where families have health concerns that would make remote learning a better health solution. It is possible that students will have an option to switch learning models at the semester as needed and as more information about the COVID-19 situation is understood. Issues will be evaluated on a case by case basis.

Remote learning was very new to students, parents, and teachers this past spring. What will Remote Learning look like for students this fall?

Remote learning in the spring operated with the understanding that students could improve their grades through remote learning, but students could not be penalized if they were not successful. Remote learning for the fall will be different in that all remote learning work (or lack thereof) will be used to assess student performance and count towards grades.

All students (whether they select remote learning or in-person learning) will be utilizing more technology this school year. Part of this is because there is a possibility the entire district may be forced by the state to return to remote learning due to COVID-19 concerns. Additionally, even for in-person learners, it is important that students understand how to use technology and be successful citizens in the 21st century.

The district has secured access to an online curriculum platform through a company called Edgenuity. Some teachers in the district have been using this software for several years and all teachers will be training shortly on how to utilize this curriculum tool. Teachers will be building curriculum using the tools from Edgenuity to craft both their in-person teaching and their online teaching. By using this approach, we feel students will have similar expectations regardless of their learning model. Additionally, this will help families be prepared in the event a move to remote learning is required by the state.

More information about blended learning (using in-person and online resources) can be found in this helpful video from Edgenuity.

[Edgenuity Video on Blended Learning](#)

In-person learning is set to be provided to all students who request this delivery model. In-person learning is to occur five days a week with shortened school days. Is there more information about what the shortened school day schedules will look like?

The primary goal with in-person learning for Westville School District will be providing an option that is open to students consistently and for as long as possible given the health considerations that are in place. The school day will be designed in a way that minimizes transmission and exposure potential. In order to sustain this for as long as possible the district is organizing the day, times for activities, and programs to serve the most essential needs and to return students home safely and as quickly as possible. That is why schools will be operating on shortened schedules. The high school and junior high school is looking at daily dismissal times of 1pm. The elementary school will be looking at dismissal for walkers beginning at 1:15 with bus dismissal set to conclude by 1:45pm.

One of the requirements for in-person learning is that all individuals inside the school building will wear face-coverings. If my son/daughter is uncomfortable wearing a mask while at school, but really wants to receive in-person learning what should we do?

To reiterate the point, the primary goal with in-person learning will be providing an option that is open to students consistently and for as long as possible given the health considerations that are in place. While we recognize that wearing face coverings indoors will be challenging for everyone (students, staff, teachers); the current guidance is clear this is a safety issue that will be imperative for the district to follow.

Teachers will be implementing times and opportunities for students to exit the building for breaks when available, so individuals can socially distance outdoors and students and staff can acclimate to these safety guidelines. When indoors, all individuals will be required to wear face coverings to create the safest environment for all students and employees.

Students who have medical challenges or who have issues related to the student's age and behavior that will make wearing a face covering difficult should strongly consider the remote learning option that is being provided. The guidance to require face coverings to reduce COVID-19 transmission by local, state, and federal agencies does not appear to be guidance that will be changing anytime soon.

Has a decision been made about sports and extra-curricular programming for this fall?

At this point there has been no decision made by local, state, or federal agencies as to whether or not sports and extra-curricular programming will be conducted as normal for this fall. The district will follow the guidance from the appropriate agencies for activities at the high school, junior high school, and intramural programs at the elementary school.

If sports and extra-curricular programming is provided this fall and my son/daughter elects to take remote learning, will they be eligible to participate in extra-curricular programs?

If extra-curricular programming is in place for the fall, the district will follow the guidance from the governing agencies for those programs (IHSA and IESA). The district plan would be to allow all students to participate in extra-curricular activities regardless of the learning model selected (remote or in-person), provided this is permissible.

My son/daughter attends a program at VASE in Tilton (the Middlefork special education program or the Safe Schools alternative education program). Will these students have an option for in-person and remote learning?

Westville students who attend programs at VASE will have options for their learning delivery. Currently VASE programs are planning for in-person learning for all students as needed (following the shortened Westville schedule). Students who would like remote learning should request an IEP meeting with the VASE administrative team to put a plan in place. Likewise, students in an alternative education program at Safe Schools who would like remote learning should request a meeting with the Safe Schools administrative team to formulate a plan.

Transportation will have many new considerations given protocols for dealing with COVID-19. What transportation issues should parents be most aware of when deciding on whether or not bus transportation is the right solution for them?

Social distancing on school buses will be extremely difficult. Guidance allows buses to transport students even when social distancing is limited, but parents should be aware of this limitation and the associated health risks. Additionally, parents must understand that students who have COVID-19 symptoms (specifically a temperature above 100.4 degrees) will not be able to ride the bus and adult supervision will be required at the stop in the event a student is unable to be released to the school's custody and ride the bus. The district and the bus service provider will not be able to take custody of a student who is sick and/or who has COVID-19 related symptoms.

I have a question that has not been addressed by the Westville's plan to open schools or this FAQ document. Who can I contact with a question?

Many questions remain and we recognize this can be frustrating. The best point of contact for questions is Assistant Superintendent Pam Dalenberg via email at dalenberg@gowestville.org or by phone at 267-3141. Ms. Dalenberg may not have every answer, but she will be the best person to collect questions and eventually provide answers as we receive more guidance and further develop our district plan. The district Facebook page is not the an easy way for the district to address concerns.

Thank you for your support of Westville Schools.

Sincerely,

Seth Miller, Ph.D.

Superintendent

Westville School District #2