



educational service center
of Central Ohio

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Considerations for Reopening School



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Considerations for Reopening School

Introduction

On April 20, 2020, Governor Mike DeWine announced that all school buildings will be closed for the remainder of the 2019-2020 school year to support the state's efforts in slowing the spread of COVID-19.

This announcement was made in accordance with Ohio Department of Health guidance. Ohio Department of Health guidance and updates regarding schools and other state restrictions can be found here (<https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/covid-19/home>). There is additional health guidance provided in the Resources section of the Ohio Department of Health website.

With schools closed and the current state restrictions—such as social distancing—in place, schools should be considering the implications of their instructional responsibilities for a gradual, controlled reopening of schools for the 2020-2021 school year.

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide schools with a comprehensive list of questions to consider when planning for the 2020-2021 school year. While each school will have its own local needs and concerns to address, this document will provide a point from which schools may start those discussions.

Scenarios

The state has yet to reach a determination in regards to restrictions that will be in place for the 2020-2021 school year. However, three potential scenarios are presented here for school administrators to reference and keep top of mind while reviewing the items for consideration as different scenarios may lead to vastly different solutions.

1. Schools are open with restrictions per public health guidelines such as social distancing, wearing masks, etc.
2. Schools are open with restrictions per public health guidelines; however, parents and students may have the option of remote learning, especially for students considered to be medically fragile.
3. Schools open as fully remote learning environments as is the case now. (This scenario may not be in effect when the 2020-2021 school year begins. However, if there is a COVID-19 reemergence, this scenario would be likely.)

* = ESC support services readily available

Essential Questions for Review

Facility Preparations

- Are there cleaning protocols in place for the general building and grounds, classrooms/offices/large gathering spaces, materials, etc.?
- Which entries will be used?
- Are there visual directions posted in common areas for transitions or will there be transitions between classrooms and other locations?
- How will classrooms be arranged and will there be visual directions?
- Does the school building have the necessary personal protective equipment (PPE)?
- What will libraries and media centers be used for?
- Have you reviewed all spaces, current usage, and the potential need caused by social distancing, specific student needs, and new medical needs?
- Do additional handwashing or hand sanitizing stations need to be installed in the building?
- Does additional protocol need to be explicitly part of orientation and practiced and modeled for all students?
- When should personal protective equipment be ordered to ensure it is received on time?
- How do you balance security with the expanded need for many entry points and staff to supervise these while processing entry of students, parents, contractors, and students?

Signs of Illness, Nurse's Office, and Wellness Activities

- When should staff come to school or stay home based on symptoms?
- When should students come to school or stay home based on symptoms?
- What should staff and students do if they are sick?
- What if a student or staff member becomes ill while at school?
- How will students who are not sick but need medical attention in another way be treated? (e.g. medicine distribution, injury, cut, etc.)
- Will medication administration happen in a site other than the clinic?
- Will the delegation of health care procedures still be done with staff and will these still happen in classrooms?
- Where will sick students or staff be held until they leave the school?
- Will the nurse's office be a last option for students to request?
- Will the nurse/aide go to students instead of the students coming to the office?
- How will immunizations requirements be enforced if doctor's offices are not administering them?
- How will chronic health information be shared with the new staff and substitute staff that will be present next fall in buildings?

Communications

- Has a district or school hotline been established?
- Does the district website have a web page to provide information related to these changes?
- How will policy changes be shared?
- How will students be supported with the new procedures, processes, and ways of doing school?
- What parent education programs need to be developed to support parents?
- As more student instruction, work products, and assessments are moved online, do we need to review directory information designations to allow for a broader scope of items?
 - Does your current photo usage release cover the new reality?
- Have you prepared and communicated to staff and students the plans for fire, tornado, and lock-down drills?
- Will you be mailing information to families?
- Are you sharing new schedules and transportation plans with other organizations such as charter schools, career centers, etc.?

Visitor Procedures (including students and staff)

- How will schedule pick up and student orientations occur in August 2020?
- Who will screen students, parents, and staff who attempt to enter the building?
- Will staff who are screening utilize PPE?
- What procedures will be used in the screening, questioning, temperature taking, assessment of what items individuals are bringing into the building?
- Will non-traditional entry points be explained to parents?
- What are the methods by which students will arrive at school?
 - What if they are alone and present with issues?
- Will volunteers be permitted in the building?
 - Who will be responsible for screening and educating them on new procedures?
- What issues need to be addressed for the organizations, parent groups, and other visitors coming to schools to support students and advance learning?

Classroom Instruction and Learning Activities

- What will class sizes be?
 - Will you split classes and staff?
 - Will you rotate staff and have students stay in a single room?
- Are you prepared to eliminate the use of community supplies in classrooms?
- Will blended learning or entire virtual courses take the place of some traditional classes?
- How will you schedule lab classes?
 - How will the equipment utilized in these courses be cleaned and ready for multiple groups of students in the same day?
- Will you allow students to leave their room and assist other staff or students?
- Will students be allowed to bring their own devices to school?
- Will you restrict items allowed to be brought to school daily?
- How will you structure school-to-work programs?
- Will progress report revisions be made based on the new assessment practices brought on by the pandemic?
- Will there be more instruction occurring outside of the school building, especially during the warmer months?
- Are there plans for virtual curriculum nights and back-to-school events?
- Will you schedule virtual student-parent conferences in the fall?
- Will you have recess, and if you do, what restrictions will be in place?
- How will you ensure inclusion of students with disabilities and meeting their needs (academic and physical)?
- How do we make online instruction similar in content and performance tasks to face-to-face instruction?
- What materials and supplies will be necessary in this environment and how will they be purchased and delivered safely?

Curriculum and Assessment

- What training will be needed for teachers and other staff if working remotely (learning management system, software, videoconferencing virtual platforms, etc.)?
- What assessments will be administered at the beginning of the school year to determine students' current levels and what interventions may be needed?
 - Is this something you have in your student information system (SIS) or do you need to acquire something new?
- What will happen to current or scheduled curriculum adoptions and material purchases?
- Are you using universal screening tools?
- Have you reviewed budget needs for online curricula, tools, and subscriptions?

Special Education, IEPs, 504s, and Gifted

- Are you including students with special needs when planning the schedule and safety procedures?
- How will you complete an assessment of progress monitoring and documentation of services?
- How will you collaborate with parents?
- What platforms will be used for delivery of service?
- Will you provide assistive technology, access, and options for support when technology is limited?
- How will you address IEPs and ETRs? (e.g. referral process; compliance dates and times; development; guidance; testing)
- How will instruction happen, and will it meet federal and state requirements (FAPE; LRE; AAC; general education and intervention specialist collaboration; staffing to support students who are no longer able to be supported as a group)?
- How are you supporting parents? Items to consider:
 - Collaboration; partnership
 - Increased communication
 - Parent training
 - Guidelines for home instruction/remote learning
 - Establishing a schedule for remote learning
 - Parent support/guidelines to engage students in remote learning
 - Access to technology;
 - Flexibility of hours and availability of staff to support parents
- How will you determine if compensatory services are needed for each individual student with a disability?
- How will you consider needs of individual students with “re-entry” (adjusted schedules, mental health supports, etc.)?
- Will there be an option to go to homes for support if families practice social distancing protocols?
- Will gifted middle school students be going to high schools for courses?

English Learners (EL)

- Are you planning for efficient screening of new ELs and any potential ELs who enroll in the spring?
- Are you planning to assess current English proficiency levels for all ELs?
- Are you using assessment data to create individual EL plans with specific goals, especially to mitigate learning loss?
- Is there collaboration between ESL teachers and content area teachers to more effectively support ELs?
- Will there be professional learning for staff on how to support ELs in class and through remote learning?
- Are you rethinking ESL staffing for more impact?
- Are you considering hiring bilingual aides to support students and families?
- Are you considering additional English learning opportunities in-person and online, utilizing technology?
- Are you creating a limited English proficiency family communication plan?
- Are you collaborating with community groups to support EL students and families?

Grade Promotions, Transitions, and Transfers

- Do your student advancement policies need to be revised?
- What changes need to be made to career advising and the transition process based on changes and new college processes?
- Will educational option policies need revision?
- How will College Credit Plus students be impacted by schedule changes, especially for those students going back and forth between the colleges/universities and high school?

Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) Supports

- What Informed practices will you use for assisting students/staff in dealing with uncertainty and stress?
- Will access to SEL supports need to be expanded?
 - If so, how will you expand them?
- How will you support students, as a whole and individually, with “re-entry”?

Student Discipline

- What happens to students who do not comply with safety procedures?
- How will everyday disciplinary issues/office referrals be handled?
 - Will students be sent out of class, escorted, etc.?
- Do you need to amend discipline policies and practices?
- How will you conduct search and seizure?
- How will you deal with bus discipline?
- What implications are there to your current dress code?
- How do student and staff handbooks need to change before the 20/21 school year?
- Will new code-of-conduct items need to be added that are tied to the pandemic and the health guidelines?
- What implications are there for restraint procedures?

Before and After School Programs

- What times will the building be open?
- Where will the programs be housed in the school?

Enrichment Activities

- How will you decide what co- and extra-curricular groups will continue to operate and what restrictions need to be implemented?
- Will you permit field trips?
 - If yes, who will supervise them?
- How will fundraising efforts be governed?
- Will school clubs be allowed to meet virtually?
- Will there be procedures for spectators of these events?

Staff

- What will new teacher onboarding look like in the summer and fall of 2020?
- How will transition meetings between levels occur over the next several months to prepare for the 2020-2021 school year?
- Will teacher meetings be face-to-face or virtual?
 - If face-to-face, how will spacing be addressed?
- What new trainings will need occur for various staff before school begins in the fall based on new pandemic policies and procedures?
 - How and when will these trainings occur?
 - Who will deliver the trainings?
- Who will welcome and orient substitute staff?
 - Will you give them access to the learning management system (LMS) and other district resources?
 - How will they become familiar with these systems?
- As sports seasons are cancelled or modified, how will you direct athletic directors, coaches, and volunteers in their actions with student athletes?
- Will you have to modify when you award supplemental contracts and the expectations for completion of these contracts?
 - What are the collective bargaining agreement implications?
- How can you better utilize your PTO/PTA as a support during these times?
- How will you support staff mental health and social-emotional well-being?

Human Resources

- How will you virtually post for new positions if you are not currently doing so?
- How will you interview candidates for vacancies?
 - Will you conduct interviews online using Skype, Zoom, Facebook, etc.?
- Does your current Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) align with new guidelines?
- Does your CBA address traveling and/or sharing staff, virtual learning, working remotely, rules and behavior of staff?
- What are the implications of moving from OTES/OPES 1.0 to OTES/OPES 2.0 next year?
- What are the expectations of administrators while working from home?
- What will access to staff members be while working remotely?
 - Will it be limited to traditional school hours?
- What guidelines are in place for contacting students?
 - Must this be through Board-owned equipment and software or can it be through personal equipment and software?
 - What if there is a concern regarding those communications?

Paraprofessionals and Classified Staff

- How many paraprofessional and classified staff will be needed?
- What will be their current and future responsibilities?
- Will you need to revise maintenance or custodial job descriptions or work schedules with new responsibilities based on new guidelines regarding the virus?

Information Technology

- How will devices be exchanged between staff/students and technology staff?
- Will there be a student-run helpdesk?
 - If yes, will there be hygiene training?
 - If no, how will this affect staffing?
- Based on spring data, will you need to invest in more inventory (laptops, headphones, etc.)?
- Will you be able to take advantage of the “free” technology offerings?
Please note: When the “free” periods expire some have an automatic renewal.

Transportation

- Are there bus drivers available for double or alternate routes?
- Do drivers have access to masks, gloves, and sanitizer?
- Do students have access to masks and sanitizer upon entry?
- What is the impact of a maximum seating limit of one per seat?
- How will bussing be adjusted for less ridership and social distancing?
 - Will more private transportation for special groups, such as medically sensitive students, be needed?
- What are the safe transportation procedures for walkers, parent drop-offs, bike riders, etc.?
- Will high school students be allowed to drive to school?
 - Will carpooling be permitted?
- Are you planning time for busses to be cleaned and sanitized each day?
- Will bus stops be monitored to ensure social distancing?

Arrival and Dismissal

- Will you need to use cafeteria and auditorium seating to safely space students while waiting for classes begin or will they be able to report directly to classroom?
- Will drop-off and pick-up spots be modified to consider traffic flow?
- Will there be crossing guards, security, and other staff, who have traditionally been available to assist with arrival and dismissal?
- How will attendance be taken?
- Will you need to communicate new expectations with early release or late arrivals based on new class/school schedules?

Breakfast and Lunch

- How many tables and seats in cafeteria and/or other locations will be needed to meet social distancing restrictions?
- How will tables and desks be arranged?
- Will there be an alternate lunch rotation schedule?
- Can classrooms be used as eating spaces?
- Will you use partitions to provide separation?
- How will breakfast, lunch, snacks be served?
 - In lunchrooms, in classrooms, full lunch, boxed lunches?
 - Who will supervise?
- What will be the cleaning procedures for the areas where food is eaten by students and/or staff?
 - Will a complete cleaning occur between sessions?
 - Where will the cleaning supplies be located?
- Can the school schedule be changed so students can eat lunch at home?

Restroom Procedures

- How many students or staff may enter at a time?
- How will access be granted?
- How will restrooms be monitored?
- Will water fountain use be permitted?

Main Office Visits Procedures

- Are individuals permitted to use office phones?
 - If yes, how will phones be sanitized?
- Will parents and students have access to the main office?
- Where will meetings and family conferences be held and how?
- Will new students follow your current new student enrollment policies?
- How will you collect required paperwork needed to begin the school year?
 - Will all paperwork become electronic?

Resources

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Pandemic: Addressing PPE Needs in Non-Healthcare Setting](#) | Federal Emergency Management Agency

[Guidance for Schools and Child Care Programs](#) | Center for Disease Control and Prevention

[MDH Guidance for Social Distancing in Schools](#) | Minnesota Department of Health

[National Coronavirus Response: A Road Map to Reopening](#) | American Enterprise Institute

[Return to School Post-COVID-19 Shutdown Brainstorming Session](#) | National Student Nurses' Association

[Supporting Learning at Home: A 5-Step Remote Learning Planning Guide for District Leaders](#) | Ohio Statewide Family Engagement Center

[Sharing What We've Learned: A Blueprint for Businesses](#) | The Kroger Co.

[What You Should Know About COVID-19 and the ADA, the Rehabilitation Act, and Other EEO Laws](#) | U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission



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