

2020-2021 Reopening FAQs

Q: Why did the District decide to start the 2020-2021 school year via Live Online Learning?

A: There were many factors that supported the decision to begin the school year via Live Online Learning, including but not limited to:

- Inconsistent and frequently changing guidance and mandates from local, state, and federal agencies. For example, some schools decided to purchase face shields for every student and staff member. Now, [the CDC suggests that face shields are not appropriate and should be worn with a mask underneath the face shield](#). The District does not have confidence that the current guidance will remain in effect and unchanged before school starts.
- The [Governor's July 1, 2020 Face Covering Order](#) made it impossible for the District to facilitate a return of all students and staff. We lack the space and staff necessary to allow 6 feet of separation to allow individuals to remove their face covering for essential tasks like eating.
- Because we cannot return to a traditional in-person instruction model, a portion of every student's education has to be delivered virtually. Reynolds staff and students need to learn how to teach and receive an education virtually. Taking the time to focus on a single model of instruction will provide a better opportunity to train our students and staff and provide greater flexibility in the future.
- We need to prepare for another forced shutdown. On July 15, [Governor Wolf indicated he was willing to, "pull the plug,"](#) on school reopening if the new surge of COVID-19 infections continues to grow. On July 24, 2020, Pennsylvania Education [Secretary Pedro Rivera indicated he didn't know if schools should reopen in the fall](#). We cannot repeat the distance learning of last spring. Our staff and students did the best they could with the lack of notice and forced shutdown, but education suffered. Now that we know there is a possibility of another shutdown, we cannot wait to train our students and staff.
- The summer heat presents difficulties with increasing ventilation and requiring students and staff to wear face coverings.

Q: How long will Live Online Learning take place?

A: Live Online Learning will be in place for at least the first nine-week grading period. This period ends on October 30, 2020. The District will continually monitor county, state, and federal guidance and statistics to determine any potential change in operating model(s) for the remainder of the year.

Q: Does virtual instruction count toward the 180-day, 900/990-hour state mandate?

A: Yes. The Pennsylvania Department of Education has issued new guidance for the 2020-2021 school year providing flexibility for schools to meet the day and hour requirements while using remote learning.

Q: Will I have the option to continue virtual instruction if/when the District returns to in-person instruction?

A: If the District begins in-person instruction, the Board of Directors will have the option of continuing to provide virtual instruction to families that elect to continue virtual instruction.

Q: When operating in a virtual model, with the virtual instruction include live lessons?

A: Yes. Students will receive live teacher led instruction from Reynolds teachers 5-days a week.

Q: How will individualized education plans (IEPs) and 504 plans be handled in the virtual environment?

A: The District will review each IEP and § 504 plan to determine if any changes need to be made to accommodate the Live Online Learning model.

Q: How are Mercer County Career Center students affected in each operational model?

A: Mercer County Career Center is in the process of developing its own reopening plan. Once their plan is complete, we will work with the career center to ensure education is not disrupted for our students who attend.

Q: How often will the District consider changing the learning model?

A: Live Online Learning will be in place until October 30, 2020. Changes to the operating model after that time will be continually evaluated by District administration and discussed at each school board meeting.

Q: Will food service continue to operate during virtual instruction?

A: Yes. Food service will continue to provide meals to students during Live Online Learning. Details will be provided before the start of the school year.

Q: Will transportation services continue to operate during virtual instruction?

A: Despite the Live Online Learning model, the District will still need to use transportation services. Transportation services will be utilized to transport students enrolled in the career center, local private and parochial schools, outside special education placements, and to fulfill other transportation needs.

Q: Will volunteers be permitted in school buildings?

A: Non-essential visitors and classroom volunteers will not be permitted at this time.

Q: Will the District be providing devices for each student to access Live Online Learning?

A: Yes. The District has secured an iPad for every student in Kindergarten and 1st grade. All other students will receive a Chromebook.

Q: When and how will I obtain my child's District issued device?

A: The District will provide an update on how and when devices will be distributed as soon as possible. The update will be posted on the District's website and communicated via the District's all call system.

Q: How will the District provide instruction to students that lack adequate Internet access?

A: The District is working with local and Internet and cellular providers to identify solutions. We understand this is a concern for many of our residents. Updates will be provided as soon as possible.

Q: Will teachers be working from home or at school?

A: Teachers will be delivering Live Online Learning from their classroom.

Q: Will teachers and staff be able to have their own children at school so they will not have to find childcare?

A: Teachers will not be permitted to have their own children at school.

Q: Are face coverings required?

A: Face coverings are required for any individual that is present on school property unless they are able to maintain six feet of separation, have a documented medical condition that prevents safely wearing a face covering incorporated into an IEP or § 504 plan, or are engaged in PIAA sanctioned active play.

Q: What about homes that have two parents who work during the school day?

A: We understand that Live Online Learning presents challenges when compared to traditional in person instruction. We hope that by providing Live Online Learning immediately following the summer break we can minimize that disruption. The District will strive to provide as much notice as possible before changing learning models to allow for parents to plan accordingly.

Q: Attendance and grading during Live Online Learning?

A: Students will be held accountable for completing work and attending school consistent with a traditional in-person instruction model. A Live Online Learning attendance policy will be adopted to allow for some flexibility while still holding students accountable.

Q: Don't children need to get back in school where they will have a normal life and get back with their friends for their social life?

A: The Corona Virus Pandemic prevents a return to normal. A socially distanced lunch and recess will be far from what children expect. There is also a chance that the kids will not be in school on the same days as their closest friends. Given the hand that we have been dealt, we hope a live online smiling teacher will be as effective as a masked socially distanced teacher.

Q: If a student cannot wear a face covering due to health or disability related issues, what is required?

A: Children two years and older are required to wear a face covering unless they have a medical or mental health condition or disability, documented in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act or IDEA, that precludes the wearing of a face covering in school. Accommodations for such students should be made in partnership with the student's health care provider, school nurse, and IEP/504 team.

Q: Will sports and extra-curricular activities take place during Live Online Learning?

A: At this time, our athletic sports competition plan has not been approved. We are waiting for further guidance from PIAA. The Plan will be approved in August.

Q: Will spectators be permitted to attend sports and activities?

A: Currently, the Governor of Pennsylvania has indicated that [spectators will not be permitted to attend K-12 sports](#). ("During the Yellow and Green phases of reopening, sports-related activities at the PK-12 level are limited to student athletes, coaches, officials, and staff only.")

Q: How is a Kindergarten or first grade student going to sit and stay attentive to their teacher for periods at a time?

A: Teachers from these grade levels are very creative and need to do their best in this setting. They will be using a variety of strategies listed below.

- Direct instruction taught in short chunks
- Varying activities, story reading, active learning (jumping jacks while spelling words, song, and dance, etc.)
- Taking class brain breaks using songs, videos, exercises, etc.
- Making sure to randomly call on all students at some point during each lesson
- Asking questions
- Show physical manipulatives and encourage students to use what they have available to join in (math: use cars, dolls, legos, etc. as counters)
- Allow times for personal dialogue throughout the day to build relationships/rapport
- music/songs
- *movement activities
- *video clips
- *positive reinforcement/praise
- *rewards