

2020-2021 FALL RESTART

FAQs

GENERAL



If I already submitted a survey response, can I change my mind now?



Yes. Just resubmit, and we can filter by the date of your response, taking the most recent as your decision. While the deadline for response is this Friday, we really are in a crunch period to make a decision. The sooner we have parent input, the sooner we can make a decision and put our plan into place.

Are parent survey responses being used as the decision or as input to guide the decision about reopening?



We asked for all parents to commit to an option to give us *input* as to how we might need to plan. Because of our size, we cannot accommodate a multitude of plan options.

What option do the teachers prefer?



The Yellow Springs Education Association (YSEA) has released a statement indicating the teachers are united in their wish to only return in a 100% online environment.

How do athletics factor into any of the three options?



Until guidance changes, students may participate in extracurricular athletics with all three options. The Ohio High School Athletic Association, in conjunction with the governor's office, has allowed for sports to resume, and some non-contact sports to begin competition. Students whose families feel they need this will be able to participate in these activities in a safe manner as prescribed by all health and safety regulations.

What if my family does not have technology or an internet connection?



The district will provide a Chromebook to every student. Hotspots will be available for those families needing this service.

How long does the district anticipate staying in whatever model is chosen?



We plan to approach this semester by semester, and change as the COVID-19 health conditions change.

Is there a way for parents to get assistance with childcare?



At this time, no. However, the district is open to exploring avenues with other partners about this possibility.

How come the decision was changed less than 2 weeks apart, while other larger school districts are attending in-person 5 days a week, and as of now there are no cases of coronavirus are in YS currently?



The superintendent made the decision to go from five days in-person to a hybrid schedule because, while the health condition in Yellow Springs may be better than in other communities, the health conditions in surrounding communities have been rapidly deteriorating. Yellow Springs Schools draws students and staff from several communities and this was taken into consideration as a hybrid schedule provides less of a risk than a full five day a week schedule.

Why was there not a comment section on the last survey, you do realize that there are parents of children in the school district that are considered essential workers that cannot work from home, where are their options? No childcare/school equals no work equals no pay equals economy suffering, ect ...



This is a difficult decision. The district does realize there are essential workers and others who will have childcare issues. Please remember that even if we return in-person in any format, we may have to move to an online format at short notice. The district is willing to be a partner in determining ways to address these issues.

If we choose Option 2, and the prevailing choices are 1a and 1b, would we then be moved to 1b (online but not taught by Yellow Springs teachers)?



If this is the case, you could pick between Option 1a and Option 1b.

Is it possible to go by quarters instead of semesters for whatever options parents choose for their children?



If the final decision is Option 1a and Option 1b, we can certainly consider allowing parents to switch proceeding on a quarterly basis rather than a semester basis. If the decision is Option 2, we would stay with that option for the first semester, and reevaluate the situation in early December. If health conditions improve dramatically (more than they have in the past four months), we could possibly consider switching to an in-person approach at the quarter's end. The ultimate goal is to have students physically present in school, five days a week, in an environment that is both safe for them and Yellow Springs teachers and staff.

How often will the school format (virtual/hybrid/full-time in person) be re-evaluated? By quarter or semester? What public health factors would determine moving from one level to a different level?



We could re-evaluate at the end of each quarter. Factors that would impact decision making could be any combination of: cases and health risk at the local level, in Greene County, in surrounding counties, and in Ohio, as well as the potential availability of a vaccine. If we return in any type of in-person format, we would move to all remote if the risk level were purple or if mandated by the governor.


With any of the options, what is the plan to address social/emotional needs during a time that is potentially traumatic and alienating for many of our students? I'm especially interested in how these needs will be addressed for teens. Support groups, socialization groups, etc. How can we make sure kids don't fall between the cracks when they are not being seen in person?




The building administration and school counselors will put together a plan to address the social-emotional needs of our students. We can begin

support groups or arrange for individual sessions remotely or safely in very small groups in person. Teacher input, as they interact with students on a daily basis, is critical in the identification of students who may be struggling emotionally.


If we go virtual whether part-time or full time can classes for the entire school day be live via Zoom or some other platform? My biggest concern is the lack of guidance and the curriculum received online.

 We are exploring a number of platforms for both synchronous (face-to-face at the same time) and asynchronous (non face-to-face and available anytime) learning.

How does what the other schools in Greene County do weigh into YS schools decision?

 It does not, with the exception of the Greene County Career Center as we have students who attend that campus. It is important for us to know what surrounding districts in the county are doing. In June, it was hoped that we could all return full-time, face-to-face, five days a week. Clearly that is not the case now. Communities within Green County are quite differently economically and socially. Yellow Springs is the most unique community in the county and the decision we make should reflect the values of the community.

What is the guidance provided by the Greene County Public Health office at this time about returning to school?

 Please see our COVID-19 Response Plan for 2020-2021 on our website. The superintendent has met several times with Greene County Public Health representatives. Neither Greene County Public Health nor any other public health system in Ohio will tell school districts whether or not they should return to school, as that is a local decision, and can only be overturned by the governor through a direct order. They do, however, provide guidance for schools that are returning in person, whether on a full-time or part-time basis. Our safety plan reflects this guidance.

Considering the differences in transmission potential and risk between younger and older children, is the YS school district looking at, or open to, different approaches for Mills Lawn and McKinney/YSHS?



This would need to be discussed further.

Have YS Schools and teachers considered outdoor classrooms? A recent NY Times article highlighted the benefits, possibilities and challenges: <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/17/nyregion/coronavirus-nyc-schools-reopening-outdoors.html>? I would strongly support this sort of creative approach and/or an outdoor and experiential component to the hybrid or fully online curriculum. I have concerns about the lack of embodied learning, outdoor and creative play learning that doesn't take place through a screen. Not to mention that all of our kids are having more screen time, anyway, due to social distancing, isolation and staying at home. I wonder if outdoor class projects, even small group outdoor projects, can be incorporated?



We have considered outdoor classrooms. Of course, this is only doable if there is cooperation from the weather. If we return in a 100% online format, students will be required to participate in projects and physical activity as that is part of our regular curriculum.

What did the YS school district learn from parent feedback on how online learning went in the spring? How will online learning improve in the fall?




We learned that while our approach worked well for a small group of students, it did not work well for the majority. We learned that we need to provide our own curriculum and do it in a way that is both rigorous and engaging. We learned that students need more one-on-one interaction with teachers. No matter what our return looks like, students will take their regular courses.




OPTION 1A: HYBRID MODEL


How will lunches be addressed?

 See the COVID-19 Response Plan on our website. This plan is in final draft form and would be updated with specifics from each building.

Would Advanced Placement (AP) classes be taught?

 Yes. Students would take all of the courses on their schedule.

What safety measures will be in place?

 See the COVID-19 Response Plan on our website. This plan is in final draft form. We will follow ALL of the five required restart conditions. Greene County Public Health will approve our plan. Most of the language in our safety plan comes directly from the Ohio Department of Health and Greene County Public Health.

Please keep in mind, that should this be our approach, we will develop additional safety guidelines (for example, creating “family” units at the elementary and middle school levels to limit interaction; reducing transitions for high school students...)

Will there be recess?



Yes. It is important for young children to have time for physical activity. Conditions would be in place, however, to meet safety recommendations from Greene County Public Health.

Will specials be offered in this option?



Yes. Students will take their regular schedule of courses. There may be some shifting of when specials occur so that we keep in family units. There will be no singing in choir and no instrumental music where instruments that require blowing are used. We will have appropriate alternatives in our music and theater classes.

Could this schedule be changed to Group A on Monday and Tuesday, Group B on Thursday and Friday and deep cleaning on Wednesday?



Yes. This specific schedule can be changed. The schedule as presented in the survey was used as an example that would not have a large span of time between when teachers and students met.

Would students be required to wear masks?



YES. Masks would be mandatory for all students and adults. This is discussed in the COVID-19 Response Plan.

If we move to the Option 1 choices and are in the hybrid model, how will lunch be handled since the current lunch area is quite small?



Each building will have a plan for how lunch will be provided in a safe manner. The hybrid schedule allows for 50% capacity, so lunches would be less crowded. Additionally, other spaces, particularly outside at the high school, could be utilized for lunch service.

If hybrid/in-person schooling is offered, will teachers with underlying health conditions or those who live with or care for vulnerable people be given the option to work remotely?



The district will follow all applicable guidelines and laws to protect our staff members who are health vulnerable or caring for those who are vulnerable. This may be through a remote work option. However, not all positions can be done remotely.

If school is in-person, what measures will be taken if a student, teacher, or even a household member tests positive for COVID-19?



These measures are dictated by Greene County Public Health. This is spelled out in the district's COVID-19 Response Plan.

The in-person guidance from GCPHD/ODH about what symptoms would exclude a child from school that day appear to include stand-alone symptoms such as a runny nose. The guidance also appears to say that if a child has a runny nose that they must be kept home/excluded from the in-person school environment until their runny nose is no longer runny and 10-days have passed. So if my child is doing in-person school and has a runny nose, my child is now to stay home from school for (at least) the next ten days, what happens to the learning in that model? If in-person school is held, and kids are routinely kicked back home for ten days at a time for a huge long list of potential symptoms, how will those students be supported while they are excluded from the in-person learning environment?



If we begin in-person, teachers will have an opportunity to review with all students the format of the class and what actions should be taken if they find themselves (due to illness or quarantine) in a remote learning situation.

In the classroom, will kindergarteners be expected to wear facial coverings?



If we return in person, all students will be required to wear masks.

What kinds of social interaction with other kids will kindergarteners have in the classroom?



Kindergarten students, like other students, will have the opportunity to safely interact with the peers in their class. Capacity will be at roughly 50%; the exact number of students in each class would depend on the total class size.

How will social development for kindergarteners be addressed in online classes?



Social-emotional learning will be a keep component of all online courses across grade levels. Students would have the opportunity to participate in a variety of formats, from the whole group to one-on-one with the teacher.

Will kindergarteners have group online classes? If so, how will they function and how many kids will be in each online class? What will the schedule for kindergarten classes online look like? Will kindergarteners have one-on-one classes with their teacher?



A specific class schedule would need to be created by all of the kindergarten teachers. Whether we return in a hybrid manner or full-time remote learning, we are required to have a specific schedule of work and attendance for all students.

Is there a plan to deal with kindergarteners who cannot focus during the online classes or are distracting to the other students?



This would be the Yellow Springs standards-based grade-level curriculum, with a continued focus on inquiry. The online experience would not resemble the online experience in the spring.

OPTION 1B: ONLINE XPERIENCE

This plan is the most restrictive option. Students would be enrolled as a Yellow Springs student but would take all of their courses through a district-purchased third-party provider. All courses are based on Ohio's academic content standards. There is support built into this program; however, this support may or may not come from Yellow Springs teachers.

This option is only available if the district moves forward with Option 1a.

OPTION 2



Is this option simply a repeat of the spring experience?



NO. Students would take all classes on their schedule and these classes would be conducted by the teacher identified on the schedule.

While it holds true that an online class cannot “look” exactly like a class held in-person, classes would be standards-based and rigorous. All classes would continue with Yellow Springs focus on inquiry and project-based learning.

Would there be a set type of schedule for students to begin building some routine?



YES. There would be a set schedule for students by grade band. This schedule would NOT be the schedule that was used in the spring. For example, students would be required to check into every class at a set time; this may be every Monday, Wednesday and Friday, with Tuesday and Thursday used for one-to-one virtual meetings between teacher and student, or small group sessions. These details will be created collaboratively by grade-level teams at each building.

Attendance, participation, and work expectations would be clearly delineated for each grade band and course.

Would specials (art, music, physical education, global language etc.) classes be taught?



Yes. Students would take all classes on their schedule.

Advanced Placement (AP) classes be taught?



Yes. Students would take all classes on their schedule.

How would the needs of students with disabilities and other learning needs be addressed?



The district intervention specialists and related service personnel would create a plan to meet all service hours for students, either remotely or in-person if safety conditions can be met.

Are teachers going to give the students a reliable, structured school day with online live lectures and time to complete classwork with the teacher monitoring the class to answer questions like Shaker Heights, OH, and other districts?



Yes.

How are you making all curriculum and lectures accessible to students with disabilities? What is the process to contest the format if it is not compatible with the accommodations a student needs?



We will be following the goals identified in all IEPs. We have new instructional tools that will assist us in this.

What arrangements will YS Schools be making for students with IEPs who struggle with learning online and whose families aren't comfortable with them returning to the physical school in the present circumstances?



The district will attempt to provide services in a face-to-face format if we can do that safely and/or provide virtual academic support and services or tele-services as is the case in some districts.

What about students on an IEP that struggle with online learning and need a connection to the class? What about students who have physical limitations?



Students who have physical limitations for online learning can also have the material in another format. We hope to provide, if we go to an all-online format, an opportunity for students to get one-on-one tutoring at some point each week.

What efforts can and will be made to serve students who are falling behind academically?



The district is planning to provide tutors for students needing additional support. This tutoring may be provided in an online format OR in-person if safety conditions can be met.

Will the students have a regularly scheduled time frame for the 100 % virtual model?



Yes. Students will follow a schedule that approximates their time in school. There will be times, however, that students will be allowed to work in a flexible manner.

Will there be food service available to students/families who receive assistance at school?



The district will provide, to those students and families who qualify, food service in the form of breakfast and lunch. Depending upon the district's delivery capacity, this may be only available via pick-up at a central location.

Will training be provided to parents to understand the software the district will be using in this remote learning environment?



Yes. The district technology coach, with the support of the teaching staff, will hold virtual training (and small in-person training if safety requirements can be met) for parents to learn the software platforms we will be utilizing. Asynchronous training courses/modules will also be made available for parents to view at any time.

How will we make sure students are on-track academically?



The Ohio Department of Education is requiring the district to submit a comprehensive remote learning plan. One requirement in that plan is an explanation of how we are going to conduct benchmark assessments at the beginning of the school year and then progress monitor academic performance as the school year continues. The district will continue to use the STAR assessment to benchmark student performance in reading and mathematics from grades 3 through 10.

What will parent access to staff members be?



Teachers will be required to respond to all emails within 24 hours. Teachers will also be expected to arrange, in a timely manner and at a mutually convenient time, virtual parent meetings upon request.

I would like more clarification on what the remote learning set up will be like. Will my child be an active (remote) participant in the class with his/her peers? Will it be a different agency? How much of it will be 'self-paced'?



Option 2 is provided by Yellow Springs teachers. Within this option there will be a variety of activities for students, including but not limited to, whole group instruction, small group (peer) work; individual assignments, and one-on-one with the teacher. Students will use a variety of technology tools as well as our regular curriculum. There may be some-self-paced components that would be similar to what students would be expected to do at home or individually in the classroom in a traditional school experience.

If full-time remote learning is the choice, what measures will be taken to identify, outreach, and mentor vulnerable students? Beyond students with identified "special needs," there are students who for a multitude of reasons may struggle to engage with the on-line format. Would the school consider assigning these students a mentor, eg. a school employee who can commit to daily one-on-one contact with vulnerable students?



All students will take an initial benchmark assessment to determine where they stand academically when we return to school, no matter if we return in-person or remotely. This will give teachers a benchmark by which to track academic progress. We would come up with a plan to support students who need extra help either remotely and/or in a small, safe in-person environment at a predetermined time. The idea of mentors is an excellent one and one that we could easily deploy.

Will the students have a regularly scheduled time frame for the 100 % virtual model?



Yes. Students will follow a schedule that approximates their time in school. There will be times, however, that students will be allowed to work in a flexible manner.

If YS is 100% virtual to start the year, and both parents are teachers who need to facilitate the education of other students during the day, what options exist for childcare during the day which would be able to help facilitate our own children's learning?



Currently, the district has no solutions but is willing to engage in collaborative discussion around this issue.

I work away from home. It will be up to my student to do all school work unsupervised which is challenging enough. She also wants to participate in athletics. How will I get her to practice if we're going with 100% online option and I'm working? What will the school do to help students who are suffering physically and mentally from social isolation? Will the school take into consideration that not all students learn best through an online format? How will the school support students of parents who work away from home and cannot be present to help their child with online work during the day?



The district is open to finding some way for students to connect physically with each other and their teachers. Additional conversations can be had about support for all students and what that might look like.

If online with YS teachers is the course, will students receive individualized attention with regularly scheduled meetings with their teachers? Large, full class meetings once a week was not successful for the younger grades.



Yes.

Will there be any loss of state funding if we don't attempt to go back full time?



We currently have the ability to continue schooling in the fall in a remote learning environment. President Trump has continually threatened the loss of federal funding, although there are questions about his ability to pull that funding.