

Hamilton Local School District 2020-2021 School Year Operations Update

July 9, 2020

Dear Hamilton Local Families,

I want to begin by saying thank you to everyone for patiently waiting, albeit anxiously, for us to prepare our plans for the upcoming school year. My team and I have been working nonstop to make a plan that we feel is best for our district. Things have been challenging for everyone since last March, and we continue to press forward while crossing each hurdle COVID-19 places in our paths. As I go over our district's operating details with you in this update, I want you to keep in mind that we all have to remain flexible as our operations can change due to the spread or containment of the coronavirus

I have worked closely with my administrative team, our Board of Education, representatives from both employee unions, the leadership from Franklin County Public Health (FCPH), referenced the Ohio Department of Education's *Reset and Restart* plan, and evaluated data from nearly 1,300 public survey responses to create what I believe is the best plan for our district, which will provide the safest educational opportunities for our students.

I want you to know that we want nothing more than to have our students in school every day. We miss our students and want to have them join us in school each day. However, we have to keep student and employee health and safety at the forefront of our decision-making by considering the current environment when making operation decisions throughout the school year. At this moment, to have students in school every day, we have to work together to lower the number of coronavirus cases in Franklin County.

Last Thursday, Governor DeWine provided school districts with guidance and issued new levels ranging from Level 1 to Level 4 to classify the severity of the virus in each county.

OHIO COVID-19 ALERT LEVELS

LEVEL 1 0-1 Indicators Triggered	Level 2 2-3 Indicators Triggered	Level 3 4-5 Indicators Triggered	Level 4 6-7 Indicators Triggered
Public Emergency Active exposure and spread. Follow all current health orders.	Public Emergency Increased exposure and spread. Exercise a high degree of caution. Follow all current health orders.	Public Emergency Very high exposure and spread. Limit activities as much as possible. Follow all current health orders.	Public Emergency Severe exposure and spread. Only leave home for supplies and services. Follow all current health orders.

As many of you, if not all, know that Franklin County is currently in Level 3 and is very close to moving to Level 4. I have to be honest, if we are in Level 3 or Level 4 at the start of school, we will not be able to safely bring all students back every day. Again, our goal is to get all students back every day, but we cannot safely do that in the current environment.

Because of this, we are starting a campaign on our district's social media accounts to promote the use of masks, limiting activities as much as possible, and to follow all current health orders to improve the county's COVID level so all students can return to school as quickly as possible. Just post a photo of you wearing your mask and holding a sign with a message of *#WeWantToComeBack #EveryDay* in your social media posts.

Remember to tag us in your posts. We have a little more than five weeks to try to move things in the right direction, and we can do our part to positively impact our county's alert level.

I want to ask that you use your influence in the community to push this initiative, and we will continually collaborate with FCPH on COVID-19 data to determine when we can get all of our students safely back to school every day. I am confident that, if we work together, we can accomplish this goal.

K-12 Academic Plans

We created learning models that we felt maximize the safety and educational opportunity for our students and they include: "Every Day" Model, 50/50 Model, Virtual Model, and a Self-selected Online Curriculum option. We are still working out details on these models, but we wanted to share what we have on paper at this time. We will update information related to these models as they are finalized.

"Every Day" Model:

All students will be brought back into our buildings for a regular school schedule every day, while complying with social distancing and safety guidelines being recommended at the time by Governor DeWine, ODH, ODE, and FCPH.

50/50 Model:

This model will see our students utilizing a weekly rotation of in-school days and online curriculum days. Students will be split into two groups ("Green" and "Gold") with one group reporting for face-to-face instruction in school on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and rotating Mondays. The other group will report for face-to-face instruction in school on Wednesdays, Fridays, and rotating Mondays. When students are working from home, they will be expected to complete assignments provided by their teacher(s).

Due to the setup of our school calendar, we chose to rotate groups on Mondays because it allows both groups of students to be in the building 88 days during the school year. At this time, we are working to make certain that we meet the standards necessary for all students to receive the instruction and services in which they are entitled. We are working to ensure an even split of students and ensuring that students in the same household are in the same group.

Virtual Model:

This model will have all students working from home accessing Google Classroom, class video conferencing/instruction, and will follow a schedule with their HLS teacher(s). This model will be utilized if we have to shut down due to various scenarios. Scheduled education time will offer live Google Meets that will include teacher(s) and classmates, which is necessary to provide the best instruction and continue to strengthen their social/emotional connection.

Virtual Model instruction schedule (These times could be slightly adjusted as we finalize plans):

Pre-K – Details for virtual model are being worked out.

HES instruction: 11:45 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

HIS instruction: 8:00 a.m. – 11:45 a.m.

HMS instruction: 11:15 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

HTHS instruction: 7:20 a.m. – 11:20 a.m.

Self-selected Online Curriculum Option:

For students who are not comfortable with any of the first three models or still feel a little uneasy about coming back into a school building, we are also offering a self-selected online curriculum option. This option offers a fully developed online curriculum that will last the entire first semester of the school year (Aug. 17 – Dec. 18, 2020). Please know that if you choose this option, you are locked in for the entire first semester of the school year. Even if our district goes into a full Virtual Model operating schedule, your child(ren) will have to remain in this the Online Curriculum option. There may not be a human teacher for this option. Students/families who want to select this option will have to choose by July 31, 2020, to begin on August 17, 2020.

Access the survey and complete all parts for us, including potentially registering your child for the Online Curriculum Option. <https://bit.ly/HLSParentSurvey2>

Those who chose this option for the first semester will have the opportunity to come back into the school setting at the beginning of the second semester. Families will also be given the option to complete the second semester in the Online Curriculum Option as well.

Availability of Technology:

We learned from your survey data that the majority of you have access to technology in your homes to complete the virtual academic requirements. We know some families in our district need to borrow technology for this school year, and we will provide details on how to request a device from our Department of Technology in the coming weeks.

Pre-K Academic Plans:

Pre-K will operate under different criteria than our K-12 grades. At this time, our preschool is allowed to have a maximum of nine (9) students in a classroom during each session. They will follow all safety and social distancing guidelines set by ODE and FCPH.

They are currently developing a virtual model for preschool students to utilize if/when the school is closed during the academic year.

Masks in our District:**All Employees:**

- Will wear masks throughout the day with exceptions being defined by FCPH.

All Students (Pre-K – 12):

- All students must wear masks on buses and in buildings. Students will not be required to wear a mask while eating lunch, and they will be provided opportunities during the school day for a “mask break” that follows guidelines set forth by ODH and FCPH.

Note: Face shields and other measures to be considered through the appeals process through our district nurse’s office. Our district will work with health care professionals and FCPH to determine appeal resolution to maximize the safety of every student.

Transportation:

ODE and FCPH guidelines allow us to transport all students who need it. However, we encourage you to transport your child if you can do so to help reduce the number of students on our buses.

When does school start?

Our Board of Education voted to move the school start date to Monday, August 17, 2020.

How should I plan for childcare?

It is recommended that families be proactive and plan for childcare as it relates to all three academic models that we shared. This will help families to be prepared if/when we have to adjust our operation plan. We know that you can't do this until your children are assigned to the "Green" or "Gold" schedule for the 50/50 model, and we are working to get you that information as quickly as possible.

In closing, I want to ask for your help and understanding on a couple of things as we work to finalize our plans.

I need everyone to complete our newest parent survey - <https://bit.ly/HLSParentSurvey2>

Your responses will let us know if your child(ren) will be returning to school this year if you want to register them for our self-selected online curriculum option, and if you intend on having your child(ren) riding the bus during the school year. This survey has a response deadline of July 31, 2020.

Please know that nearly all of our employees are out of the office at the moment. If you have a question, please call your child's building and leave a detailed message. We will get back with you as quickly as we can, but please remain patient as our staff returns from summer break.

We will share more information with you about the 2020-2021 academic year in the coming days/weeks. It was important to us to get this update to families so they could begin planning and thinking about whether they would like to select the Online Curriculum option or come back to the school building whether it is 50/50 or "Every Day."

Again, thank you for your patience as we work to finalize plans for Every Ranger by considering Every Reason for them to receive the best education Every Day!

Sincerely,



Mark Tyler, Superintendent
Hamilton Local School District