

Reopening School Parent Q & A Part 2

What will the day schedule look like for 7-12 students? Will they have a shortened day?

The school day will start and end at the same time it did prior to COVID 19 closure. See block schedule below (times listed but the print is tiny) Times for classes are listed under Monday blocks only but apply to all in-person days.

Semester 1/2				
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
A Day-Cohort A	A-Day-Cohort A	Virtual	B Day-Cohort B	B Day Cohort B
Block-8:00-9:20 Per. 1a	Block Per. 1a		Block Per. 1a	Block Per. 1a
One Per. 1b	One Per. 1b		One Per. 1b	One Per. 1b
Block-9:24-10:44 Per. 2a	Block Per. 2a		Block Per. 2a	Block Per. 2a
Two Per. 2b	Two Per. 2b		Two Per. 2b	Two Per. 2b
Lunch-10:48-11:33	Lunch		Lunch	Lunch
Academic Advisement	Academic Advisement		Academic Advisement	Academic Advisement
Block-11:37-12:57 Per. 3a	Block Per. 3a		Block Per. 3a	Block Per. 3a
Three Per. 3b	Three Per. 3b		Three Per. 3b	Three Per. 3b
Block-1:01-2:21 Per. 4a	Block Per. 4a		Block Per. 4a	Block Per. 4a
Four Per. 4b	Four Per. 4b		Four Per. 4b	Four Per. 4b
Cohort B-Virtual	Cohort B-Virtual	All students are virtual	Cohort A-Virtual	Cohort A-Virtual

How will courses like SUPA Economics and OCC English 103/104 work this year?

We are working with our college partners to find the best ways to deliver courses in our new scheduling model. At this point, while we are still working through how to approach this, we are fairly confident that most of these courses will be able to be accessed by our students. More to come.

If we select for our child to have virtual schooling next year, what will teacher contact look like?

Students on virtual instruction will have daily teacher contact.

Will students still be able to take classes such as art due to material sharing etc.?

We are working closely with our art department and other content areas that have more of a “hands on” focus to determine the best ways to approach materials use and cleaning between use. We believe we will be able to accommodate most of these courses continuing with some modifications.

What happens when a student or staff member becomes ill?

We will be working closely with the health department on all cases of illness. What we believe will happen is that someone who is ill with symptoms that could be attributed to COVID 19, after an evaluation by the school nurse, will be sent home and referred to their pediatrician/physician for further testing. Other actions will be determined after consultation with the Onondaga County Department of Health. In order to return to school, the district requires a negative COVID 19 test and symptom resolution.

The survey indicated that students with an IEP may be able to attend school for four days a week. Is that also being offered to students with a 504 Accommodation Plan?

The offer for 4 days a week is based off of a requirement to allow, if possible, for high needs students to attend 4 days a week. Unfortunately, that does not apply to students with 504 plans as they are considered regular education students.

Will students be mixed with students from other classes if they use the after school program?

Yes. It is inevitable that in before and after school programs, including daycare options parents are using that students will not be able to be separated according to classroom groups only.

Is there a way to have all members of a particular grade level at the high school attend together to facilitate the bonding of the class? We have heard other schools are accomplishing this.

While I can't speak to the specifics of what other schools are doing and how, I can tell you that with the staff we have, the space we have, and our commitment to offer most if not all of the courses we typically do, there is no way for us to accomplish this. We have checked in with some of the districts using this model and they have made choices to eliminate large portions of their elective offerings to accomplish this feat along with other factors unique to their districts. We are holding out hope that there will be a vaccine released and possibly we will have all of our students back together for the second semester. Fingers crossed!

How will my child fit in all of their courses and still have time for a resource room?

We will schedule a resource room daily during a block of time that complies with the minute requirement of the IEP.

How does a block and semestered schedule work?

Students are scheduled for half of their courses in the first semester and half in the second. For example, first semester, students may take English, a science class and social studies with PE, either in person or virtual (PE will go on all year every other day for a half block FYI). In January, during the time normally set aside for midterms, students will take their final exams for first semester courses.

If students select all virtual/remote instruction, will their teachers be one of the current Marcellus teachers from that grade level or content area?

It is nearly definite that the teacher would be a Marcellus teacher. The teacher assigned will be certified to teach in the area of assignment

Will full virtual/remote students have the same teacher all week long?

Yes. As far as we envision at this time, teachers will be specifically assigned to remote learning and will stay with their students all week long.

Will full virtual/remote students have a chance to meet their teacher in person prior to school starting?

It is very unlikely that virtual students and teachers will meet in person. Most of the teachers assigned to full virtual are people who fall into risk categories and therefore avoiding contact with people is important. The same may be true of some of the students who will be full virtual/remote.

How much synchronous instruction will full virtual/remote students receive?

They will have daily synchronous contact with their assigned teacher. It is difficult to provide a definitive answer regarding the amount of time as that will have a lot to do with how many students are assigned to a given teacher and what the learning activities and plans are for a given week.

Will students who are full virtual/remote be able to participate in music lessons remotely as well?

We are still solidifying plans for music instruction but any opportunities afforded to in person students will be extended to full virtual/remote students.

Will music lessons still be available?

It is highly likely that we will still be offering music lessons, many remotely but possibly in very small groups in person. Our music department is still working through their plans and making schedules so more definitive information will be forthcoming.

Will students use physical materials or will everything be done using devices and digital resources?

It is highly probable that students will have a mixture of physical materials and digital ones.

Students choosing the hybrid model, will they have the same teachers on days when they are remote?

We are still working on schedules. On Wednesdays when everyone is remote, students will have some sort of a synchronous meeting with their teacher(s) but on days when they are remote, their teachers are teaching the other half of the students. They will connect in some way, synchronously or asynchronously or another teacher may be assigned to provide check ins and office hours. We will know more soon.

How will students with underlying medical issues, like allergies, be handled to avoid having them sent home for COVID testing when the need to blow their nose?

Certainly everyone will be on high alert when we return in person. That being said, make certain that the nurse is aware of your child's conditions. She will work with classroom teachers but will also be the one to assess a child if they are sent to the nurse from their classroom. Having that knowledge would help with possible overreactions to symptoms. We ask that parents understand though, that we may want a child assessed by their family physician to be certain we are taking an abundance of caution to protect everyone.

Will devices be traveling to and from school everyday?

It is very likely that they will be. As we had A LOT of damage when devices were returned to us in the spring. That being said we need students to have access to digital resources when they are in school as well. I can envision that younger students especially may be directed to leave devices home on certain days if the instruction doesn't involve using them at all. We ask that you work with your child to learn how to care for their device as the repairs are costly.

How will the district enforce students wearing masks?

Wearing masks is a requirement for those choosing to return to in-person schooling. Therefore, if this poses a problem, we would imagine that people are choosing for their child to be full virtual/remote unless the child has an underlying condition and receives a note from the doctor stating that they are not able to wear a mask. It is something that we all need to do. If we struggle with students to get them to comply they will be sent home. If the struggle continues, perhaps the child would be better suited to full virtual instruction until masks are no longer required. We ask that you work with your children starting now, explaining the importance of wearing masks and also building in periods of time to practice wearing masks for long periods of time as it is a bit more challenging than wearing them in short spurts only.

Will the district have masks if my child forgets theirs or something happens to it during the day?

Definitely. We have purchased sufficient masks to provide them to anyone who has a need.

How will student drop off and pick up work? Will I be able to drop off my children all at one school?

We are still finalizing plans but when we have them ready, we will send DETAILED information to all families. What I can tell you now is that we will have expanded pickup and drop off windows. Students will proceed directly into the building as they arrive so that a crowd is not created at any of the entrances. It is likely that you will need to drop children off at their respective buildings at least initially until we see if our plans will work. We are grateful to have so many families willing to transport to alleviate crowding on busses but that will create much more traffic on campus that we need to manage to keep everyone safe. My best advice is to enter the campus with as much patience as possible as it may take a little while for us to get the hang of creating a flow for people. We anticipate HS students drop off to happen in front of the building with traffic entering on Mustang Hill and proceeding back out through the circle. KCH is planning to create a special drop off lane where staff parking is usually located. DMS drop off will be on the Reed Parkway side.

How will playground equipment be cleaned? How will students use the playground?

We are hoping that we can create a schedule for individual classes to access the playground. We will work with students to make sure they understand the need to keep their masks on and respect social distancing as much as possible. In between classes, equipment (touch surfaces) will be wiped down. If we find this plan not to work, we will reassess.

Will alternate activities be available to students uncomfortable with using the playground? Will my child be able to stay indoors during recess if they prefer?

We will encourage all children to go outside for recess to get fresh air whether they wish to use playground equipment or not. We will work with our PE staff to develop safe activities for students to do outside in lieu of using the playground itself. It is important to note that at this time, students engaged in aerobic activities should maintain 12 feet of social distance making many games and activities impossible. It is likely there will be indoor options there have been in the past but we are still working out staffing.

What is the COVID 19 testing protocol for the district?

We posted testing protocols last night. These protocols were developed with the Onondaga County Health Department and will be followed across the county. In short, if a child demonstrates symptoms that could be attributed to COVID 19 they will be sent to their family physician who will determine if a test is needed. Once results are in, if they are negative and symptoms have resolved they can return to school. If they are positive they need proof of a negative test and a doctor's clearance.

Under what circumstances would school close?

That is complicated. Here are some possibilities. As we enter the fall and the typical illnesses begin to arise, I can envision getting to a point where enough staff are home ill that we would not safely be able to be open. This situation could arise at any time and may be one of those early morning calls, like a snow day without the snow! I also believe that if COVID 19 infection rates rise in our county, region or state, the Governor will be closing schools. I also can imagine that if our school district began to have cases, the county health department may recommend that we close.

Will there be instances where students would be sent home during the day? How can I ensure that my young child wouldn't be left with no supervision if I am working?

The only time at this point that students could be sent home part way through the day would either be due to an emergency or if your child is ill and you are asked to pick him/her up at school. We do not have any students half days planned through the end of January at this point. That being said, please make sure your emergency contacts are up to date so that if we have an emergency, your child has a safe supervised place to go. We will not leave a child without supervision.

Are rooms air conditioned in the district? If not, can fans be used?

Most rooms are not air conditioned. We will be using fans and also trying to keep windows open whenever possible to create additional air flow.

How will courses like tech class and FACS work?

The teachers who teach those courses are working on ways to safely engage students in person while also preparing for students who are full virtual/remote or in the instance that schools need to close down again. We may send “kits” home with students to work on things there as well.

Why aren't we able to keep grade levels together especially at the high school level so that students can be with all of their friends?

Each district has different situations with space and staffing that may enable them to configure cohorts differently. We are not able to staff the courses we offer under that structure. It is our hope that students WILL all be together at least by the second semester.

How will classrooms be set up? Will there be a desk for each student or will cohorts share desks?

If teachers have a spot for students to store personal items, it is likely we will put one set of desks in the room and cohorts will share desks. If that is not possible we will have a desk for each student in each cohort in the classroom with only half being used at a time.

Will kindergarten students have a classroom visit day and then will parents be allowed to walk them to their classroom the first day?

We will not be having the first day as a visit to your classroom day but we will have an opportunity for staggered family visits over the course of three days so that students and parents can see the classroom and walk to it together. Mr. Montgomery will send out more information soon. On the first day we will have extra staff to assist with kindergarteners at the door. Obviously if a child is distraught we will figure something out but with requirements to severely limit any visitors to the building and needing to screen anyone who is allowed in, we are trying to limit that.

If I completed the survey saying I would drive my child, but realize later on they need transportation, can I make that switch?

Of course we will do everything possible to make switches based on transportation needs as quickly as possible. We will need to do so keeping social distancing guidelines in mind. We recognize that ultimately it is the school district's responsibility to transport students who are eligible for transportation and greatly appreciate the willingness of families to assist with this on a temporary basis.

For the hybrid model, will Wed and the other virtual days be new material or just make up days?

They will be a combination of teaching material and students applying what they have learned.

For the Cohort of kids that will be starting their school year with two virtual days, what will be the expectations for the first two days and how will materials for those first two days be provided to the kids?

Students in the A cohort will not need to do much (unless a teacher reaches out in some way) prior to their first in person day which is 9/14. They will get their devices that day. Each cohort has an equal number of in person days during the first semester.

When will the Cohorts be released, not details, just what cohort my child is in?

Letters were mailed on 8/24 from KCH. DMS plans to have things loaded in to school tool by mid week (8/26) (with a letter to follow) and the high school by the end of the week (8/28)

Have you received any guidance from the State on how children will be tested this year - related to the universal screening mandate typically completed in the fall as part of RTI?

Students will still take the universal screener. NYSED is still making decisions regarding state testing for the year.

Can you explain what type of activities kindergarten students will be doing on virtual days? Will they have an iPad at home?

Yes, they will have their iPad at home. They will be doing a variety of things, learning games, virtual meetings with the teacher, whole group and small group, read alouds, etc. More details will come directly from the assigned classroom teacher very soon.

On virtual days, can the check in for attendance and school work be completed in the evening?

Yes, classroom teachers will be reaching out to families to determine work schedules and make contact times that fit with the teacher's schedule and that of the families.

How come you can't bring all of the younger kids back when it sounds like in order to social distance you need to have 11 kids. Last year, there were only 12 kids in most kindergarten classes.

We reduced a section of kindergarten this year so our numbers in classrooms are larger. We did so after experiencing low kindergarten numbers in September of 19.

What will kindergarten look like for a child doing all virtual learning? Will the student have the same teacher? Will they log on the same time each day?

Yes. Ms. Alexander will be teaching virtual kindergarten students. She will reach out to families and create a schedule that works for you and her. She will be connecting daily with her virtual learners.

Do all classrooms have their own bathrooms? How will they be cleaned and disinfected?

At KCH, yes. We will see opportunities when students transition to specials to do an extra cleaning of bathrooms.

Are teachers allowed to wear clear shields/visors? Seeing teachers pronounce words is very important for younger students.

We have purchased clear masks and shields for anyone who wishes to use them. Face shields must accompany a mask not take the place of one.

Is there a scenario where the school would need to decide to go all virtual?

Yes. If I do not have sufficient staff to safely run a building we will close (like snow day) or if rates of infection rise and McMahon or Cuomo direct us to close.

Will masks be required on the school bus?

Yes

How are other districts allowing students to remove masks when 6' apart?

They are taking more liberal interpretation of the guidance. After several talk with Dr. Gupta and an infectious disease specialist on our community, I am confident wearing masks is the best protection

Will children have recess or access to the playground during the day?

Yes. Students will use the playground, one classroom at a time, on a rotating basis.

If there was a serious need, can a student move from in-person to remote?

Yes. We will work with families as best we can to keep our students moving forward. While whenever possible we would like to minimize transitions made mid marking period, we want to make sure our students feel safe, comfortable and able to learn. That is more important.

Will the playground be disinfected each time a class is done using the equipment?

We will wipe down equipment between playground use.

If a student is having trouble keeping their mask on, what will a teacher do?

Depending on the age of the child and other factors, the teacher will work with the child to encourage them and reinforce the importance of wearing a mask to protect each other. If we ultimately fail, we will need to remove the child from in person schooling. We recommend that parents begin to work with their children on extending the length of time they keep a mask on in preparation for school. It will be a big help to everyone.

Are we able to see how the classrooms are set up?

We will invite kindergarten and 4th grade families in for staggered in person open houses. The rest of the grade levels we will provide some virtual options and video options to see how things are set up.

Should we assume students will start in-person for the full day 9/10 and 9/14 depending on cohort, including kindergarten?

Correct. Cohort B will lead us off on the 10th and 11th. Kindergarten students will have a full day on their first day and will use the staggered in person open house as an opportunity for parents to accompany their child to their classroom for the first time.

Will virtual learning be an all day interaction or will it be done on their own pace each day?

Virtual learning will have a combination of synchronous teacher contact and asynchronous learning where the student selects time, location and pace.

Will students have specials?

Yes

Is there a way for us to find out who is in our children's class and cohort?

Only by word of mouth. The district really can't release that information.

Is band cancelled for the year? Are there any options for music instruction for our 4th graders who will be starting an instrument this year?

At this time all ensembles are scheduled for the second semester beginning at the end of January. Fingers crossed for a vaccine and the ability to gather and sing and play instruments!

If a vaccine is developed, will it be a requirement to return to school?

While this is not my decision to make, based on the Governor's decision to remove the religious exemption for vaccines and severely limit medical exemptions, it is my opinion that it will be a requirement to return to school once it is available.

How will daily attestations work?

Parents will be sent a packet of forms. Each day you will check your child's temperature and attest that they do not have any symptoms associated with COVID 19. You will tear off the signed form and send it to school. They will give it to someone as they enter the building. People will be collecting them at the door. Every 10th day there is a longer questionnaire required as part of the screening. If we determine that we can manage using an electronic means and still capture everyone at the door we may change to that after a short time.

We don't need to worry about supplies right? Just a backpack and lunch?

For K-3 that is correct. Everyone else will receive some sort of supply request.

Will students still be appropriately prepared for the Regents Exam? If there are no Regents exams, what will the culminating exam be?

We will be working to ensure that our students are prepared for regents exams. The State Education is still contemplating whether or not they will be given this year but until we hear otherwise, we will work to prepare our students. If they are not given, teachers will select an assessment format that they feel is the best fit for their course. They could range from an objective based test or some sort of culminating project.

Will AP exams be second semester?

Yes. We scheduled courses for AP in the second semester to create a situation where the learning that takes place in such courses is close to the exam so that students will have the best possible chance for success should they choose to take the exams.

Will Freshman be able to walk through the school before the start of school?

Yes. We have set aside 12-3 on 9/8 and 8-11 on 9/9. These are student only events. Please drip off your children. Masks will be required while they are on campus and they should adhere to social distance guidelines of 6 feet. We will be around to point them in the right direction should they need it. Students should also use sanitizer at the door as they enter and again as they depart.

Can you explain how virtual learning will look?

Virtual learning will contain a mixture of synchronous and asynchronous opportunities. Students will have synchronous contact with their assigned teacher(s) daily. This can be in a whole group or smaller learning groups. For K-6 students it is likely they will devote Wednesday's to connect with their special area teachers although that isn't completely finalized yet. Students will also be given work to complete including projects. They will be able to work on those at their own pace adhering to any due dates posted by the teachers. Students may also have opportunities to meet with small groups of fellow students with and without the teacher to collaborate on projects.

For virtual learning, will students be expected to meet every day, same time?

It is likely that once a teacher has established the time to meet, it will stay consistent. For students in grades 7-12. They will have a schedule just like all other 7-12 students and will be expected to attend virtual sessions following that schedule.

The SAT and ACT exams have been cancelled at some locations through August. Will the HS be able to help out with this at all?

We have had little success finding spots for students to take exams. I encourage parents to keep checking sites with open slots. If we can help we will certainly try. The process to become an approved site is a lengthy one and while there was rumor that sites were looking to find overflow locations, we haven't been told that officially. We encourage you to speak to your children's college and university choices. They are well aware of this struggle and we need to make sure they do not create inequitable situations by setting expectations that a large segment of the population cannot meet.

Will everyone be switching classes all at once or staggered?

We will have staggered release from class and therefore arrival too.

Schools like ESM are now shifting to full online, is there any thought of that in Marcellus?

Unless we are forced to by the Governor we have no intention of making that shift. We have worked hard to prepare and schedule and we feel very capable of pulling this off.

Will we be able to borrow/use a school chromebook if our child is all virtual?

Yes. Fully virtual students will be asked to come to the campus to pick up initial materials. The options are 9/8 between 3PM and 6PM or 9/9 between 8 AM and 11AM. This will be a drive up service. Once you arrive and give your name we will bring items out to your vehicle.

Will high school classes be kept together - all seniors, etc.?

No. It is impossible to schedule the array of courses we are trying to offer using this model. Schools that have done this have limited the number and variety of courses to an extreme degree from what I understand.

Will School Tool be used in the same way to monitor progress?

Yes. We have set an expectation that teachers post due dates in Google Classroom or BUZZ that match those in SchoolTool so as not to create confusion. We also expect grades to be

updated at least once a week to keep better track of students who may be falling behind before it is too late.

Is Cohort A's first day September 14th?

Yes.

Do we call the attendance office if a student is sick on a virtual day?

Yes. If your child cannot "attend" to their studio that day, including completing whatever assignments they should, please call them in so that a teacher can adjust a due date for him/her.

Can you talk about what transportation might look like?

We developed a detailed plan for transportation that is posted to the website and social media including a traffic flow map, bulleted list of procedures and a video explaining. It provides separation from car and bus traffic and uses additional police resources to insure we take care of potential traffic jams. See those materials. The bulleted list will also be mailed home in a mailing for back to school.

Can students stay after school for extra help?

At this time all students in grades 7-12 will depart at 2:21 and teachers will provide "virtual after school help" to whichever cohort was NOT in person that day. This is an experiment but we want to try it out so that students who are home can access their teachers if they have questions. If we find it isn't working as we had hoped, we will make changes to the model. It also helps with keeping buses socially distanced and predictable.

What about kids with allergies? Will teachers know of the condition so they don't get sent to the nurse?

If our child has seasonal allergies, please discuss this with the school nurse and share what their typical symptoms are. If possible we would like documentation from a doctor that they do in fact suffer from allergies. Obviously everyone's a little nervous about symptoms and will be on high alert as we transition back so such information will be very helpful in being as practical as possible.

Will student drivers need a new parking pass?

They may use last year's pass to start. We will issue new ones once they return.

If we opted to drive and something changes, can my child get on a bus?

Definitely. Just let us know and we will help you out.

Do students have to wear masks all day?

Yes. They will be able to take short mask breaks but otherwise wear them while at school.

Will students go to the cafeteria for lunch?

We are planning to keep lunch in the classrooms for the most part to start the year. We will see how things go and may be able to rotate some classes in the cafeteria for a change of scenery if nothing else.

What will physical education look like?

The phys ed teachers are hard at work designing activities that comply with the guidelines we are given. In some cases, older students will have the chance to opt for virtual PE that will utilize a tracking app for students to design and implement individualized fitness programming.

Is there a plan in place for a positive case?

Yes. We will work closely with the health department, as we have been directed, to initiate contact tracing supported with information provided by the school. Their county contact tracers will determine what quarantining is necessary and by whom. We will also work with them to inform those who need the information. I can't say for sure how broadly the informing will be because it will depend on the contact the individual had and with whom. We are obligated to protect health information but obviously in small towns, it is difficult to do.

Will virtual learning students have a schedule?

Yes. Students in grades 7-12 will have a schedule just like their peers attending in person.

Do high schoolers have to get tested before school?

No. The county is encouraging high school students to seek out one of the mobile testing sites and be tested before school but it is not required. We hope to hear of mobile testing sites accessible to our staff and students sometime this week (8/24)