



EXCELSIOR SPRINGS

SCHOOL DISTRICT

— *Together, Achieving Excellence* —

At a special meeting this evening, the Excelsior Springs Board of Education approved our district's updated Considerations for Reopening, the plan for the 2020-21 school year. We believe this plan:

- Allows our schools to open as safely as possible.
- Provides a structure for monitoring health conditions that could lead to changes in learning models during the school year.
- Gives families a choice if they prefer virtual learning for the 2020-21 school year.

This email is intended to outline the high-level considerations. While there are many details we now know, there still are many that will be decided in the coming weeks at both the district and school level. We have a page on our website dedicated to the reentry plan at http://www.essd40.com/district_information/novel_coronavirus_2019-n_co_v. On this site you can find FAQs and other information. Of course, we will continue to email updates to our families and staff as well. Please email jtomlinson@ga.essd40.com if you have a specific question you would like answered.

School start date has moved to Tuesday, September 8th.

Elementary In-Person Learning Model

We will offer in-person learning for all elementary students to begin the school year.

- Safety measures will be in place, face coverings will be required for all staff and students regardless of age, enhanced cleaning and social distancing when possible.
- Students will remain in a cohort group as much as possible.
- If mandated by the health department or government entity, or through action by the Excelsior Springs Board of Education, pivoting to hybrid or remote learning may be required if conditions warrant.

Elementary students also may choose virtual learning.

Middle and High School Hybrid Learning Model

Our hope and goal is for secondary students to attend every day. However, we believe health conditions and local health agencies recommendations warrant starting the school year in a hybrid model in which students attend in-person instruction two days a week, work remotely two days a week and receive interactive virtual instruction one day

a week. Following the staggered start on September 8-9, middle and high school students will begin the year in a hybrid learning model. We opted for the hybrid model at the secondary level to begin with for three primary reasons:

1. Class schedules at the secondary level make it difficult to remain socially distancing in cohort groups
2. Data shows that older children are more likely to spread COVID than younger children
3. In general, secondary students are more likely to have success learning more remotely than elementary students

When in person, safety measures will be in place, including required face coverings, enhanced cleaning and social distancing when possible.

Like elementary students, secondary students have the option of enrolling in virtual learning.

Re-Entry Task Force

We have assembled a COVID Re-Entry Task Force to help us make decisions throughout the year about the most appropriate models of care given current community health data.

This is a group of educators, administrators, health care professionals, and district staff, who will convene every two weeks to analyze health data. This group will recommend to our Board of Education whether to remain in our current models of learning or to move to either less restrictive or more restrictive models.

The Re-Entry Task Force's has been meeting regularly since May and will continue to do so as long as COVID-19 remains as a health issue in our community. The evaluation process will continue throughout the school year.

ESSD Virtual Learning

Excelsior Springs Schools offer students a virtual learning experience with optional in-person learning experiences. Excelsior Springs Schools is making adjustments in staffing to allow for an increase in the virtual enrollment this year. If you are interested in attending virtual learning for the year, please visit:

http://www.essd40.com/UserFiles/Servers/Server_663380/File/Off-Site%20Learning%20Request%20Form.pdf

Enrollment

Enrollment for the 2020-21 school year opens around noon on Monday, Aug. 10th. Parents/guardians can visit

http://www.essd40.com/parent_resources/moving_to_essd with instructions for where to go to complete enrollment. If you are unsure about which learning model you

will choose, we would encourage you to speak with your building principal or counselor at enrollment.

New Calendar

The Board of Education approved a revised district calendar that reflects the new start date of Sept. 8. The majority of professional learning days will be before the start of school so educators can better collaborate and prepare for the various scenarios they may face during the school year. We were able to complete this calendar while leaving holidays and winter break, but have eliminated spring break and will still be dismissing the school year before Memorial Day.

Safety Measures

In addition to the safety measures mentioned above (wearing of masks, enhanced cleaning and social distancing when possible), many other safety measures will be taken throughout the district. Those include, but are not limited to:

- Educating students about proper mask wearing and hand sanitizing.
- Limiting shared materials in the classroom.
- Ensuring only approved cleaning supplies are used in buildings, and ensuring there are extra cleaning supplies in classrooms.
- Encouraging students not to use lockers at the secondary level to minimize congregating in hallways.
- Eliminating large gatherings of students such as assemblies.
- Encourage directional traffic in hallways to maximize social distancing.
- Maximizing space and scheduling to allow for social distancing during breakfasts and lunches.
- Family units sitting together on the bus. Also, students will load from the back to the front of the bus, and unload from the front to the back to minimize potential exposure.

Equity for All Students

Our special education, English language learners, and students who meet at-risk criteria may require more onsite instructional time when schools are operating in a hybrid learning environment. The Board of Education approved the flexibility to meet individual learning needs through additional onsite instruction.

More Info to Come

We will distribute more information as it becomes available. Thank you for your patience, understanding and grace as we navigate these difficult times. Please visit our website at www.ESSD40.com for the most up to date information.