



## Return to Building Y5 - 6 Update

September 24, 2020

Dear DCS Families and Staff,

In early August, we adopted our [plan for the 2020-2021](#) school year. At that time, we shared that we were not willing to be one of the first districts to bring students back into the buildings for several reasons. We wanted to allow districts from other parts of the country and state to open so we learn from their experiences and monitor if large outbreaks occurred with the schools that opened to face-to-face instruction. We also were being cautious of the local data and the impact of the university students moving into the area. As a result, we created a plan to monitor data and phase-in students starting with our youngest students first. As educators and as parents, we know that this age group developmentally struggles the most with remote learning.

We know that routines are really important for kids, especially our youngest students. In recognition of the need for notice before a change, we are committed to providing families of our youngest students with a two-week notice of any changes. That being said, we are excited to see our students as soon as possible.

### Anchor/Beacon/Wylie/Creekside return to Buildings:

**Starting on Thursday, October 8th**, we will begin our hybrid schedule for our Young 5's through 6th-grade students with 50% of our Homeroom students attending daily using an A group and B group schedule. Based on current class sizes, we can keep classes between 10-14 students at a time per classroom. Each family will be contacted by the buildings to notify which students are in the A group and which students are in group B. We've worked to pair siblings in the same group to attend the same days in Y5-6 in order to simplify schedules for families. Group A students will attend school on Mondays and Thursdays from 9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. Group B students will attend school on Tuesdays and Fridays from 9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. All other days will be virtual days. Details related to bus times, safety protocols/procedures, school dropoffs/pickups, lunches, and virtual day schedules will be shared in the coming days.

**Mill Creek and Dexter High School** students will continue to work virtually until early November.

### Key information for parents:

In order to help us safely transition students into the building as smoothly as possible, we are requesting the following from our parents:

- If you live in our district boundaries and plan to utilize transportation, please complete the following form no later than Monday, September 28th: <https://forms.gle/LhLbh995aKGpqECj9>. We need accurate data to ensure the number of students on each route can safely be supported and to finalize routes. Currently, we are short 5 bus drivers so your help is greatly appreciated.
- Please plan to have your Young 5 - 6th-grade student attend their **morning meeting via zoom on Wednesday, October 7th** sometime between 8:15 - 9:15 a.m. (exact times will be shared next week) in order to review final next steps for school starting on October 8th (Group A) or 9th (Group B). October 7th is count day and we ask your assistance to keep attendance records as simple as possible. We are working with each family and adapting programming to meet the needs of our families. In a normal school year, we generally do not operate anything specific on count day. However, with changes in the laws and the fluidity of this school year, we really appreciate your assistance to make attend the class zoom meeting on October 7th.
- An information session for parents is scheduled for Thursday, October 1st at 7:00 p.m. via zoom. You must register in advance for this webinar using this link: [https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_d\\_TAvV7TR-KaFfe9ACM1Sw](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_d_TAvV7TR-KaFfe9ACM1Sw). The meeting will be streamed live at <https://www.dexterschools.org/district/live-stream> for anyone who has difficulty getting in via Zoom and will be recorded for later viewing.
- Information on AfterCare for A and B days will be made available from Community Education next week.
- For families transporting their children to/from school, we will provide detailed drop-off and pickup information specific to each building in the next week. One change of note: many of our families with children at different schools have their students walk to one school. We ask that this not be the practice at this point so we can ensure student safety, our cohorting protocols, and avoid clustering of students. We will have a system for your students to be safely released from school when you arrive at the school. Please stay tuned and know that we are planning for parents with children at multiple schools to be able to safely drop off and pick up their children in a timely manner.

## Protocols and Next Steps:

We will be sharing detailed protocols related to all aspects of the school day. For the sake of brevity in this communication, please know that all students and staff will be required to wear a mask from the time they enter the bus or the building until the time they leave the bus or building. Mask breaks will be provided during recesses and other scheduled times. No visitors or non-staff will be permitted in the buildings. Lunches will be held in the cafeterias with 6' distance between students. All students will be eligible to receive a lunch at no cost to families but students may still bring their own lunches. This will help us efficiently provide a safe lunch environment for all students and staff. We will also require families to make sure their child meets the health requirements for attending school according to the [DCS screener](#) prior to each school day.

## Changing from Homebased to Homeroom:

If your family chose the Home-Based option for your Young 5 - 6th-grade student and you are interested in changing, we will provide several opportunities to make the change while still allowing us to keep our students in a cohort model for safety.

### Window #1

- October 21-23 - Open for families to request a switch from Home-based to Homeroom
- October 26-30 - Week for principals to plan and switch class lists
- November 2 - Students start in their new class

### Window #2

- November 18-20 - Open for families to request a switch from Home-based to Homeroom
- November 23-27 - Week for principals to plan and switch class lists
- December 1 - Students start in their new class

### Window #3

- January 13-15 - Open for families to request a switch from Home-based to Homeroom
- January 18-22 - Week for principals to plan and switch class lists
- January 25 - Students start in their new class

## Teacher Training Dates:

All Young 5 - 6th-grade teachers will be in final training on the protocols on Wednesday, September 30th, and Friday, October 2nd. This will require a change in the schedules for those days. The change in schedule will be shared by teachers with their individual classes.

## Wrap-up Thoughts:

This school year will not be a normal school year. We all know that and we ask that you share in our excitement to see your children in our schools and to continue providing the phenomenal Dexter Community Schools education we provide for kids.

Up to this point, we've been tracking external data to make decisions on when to begin phasing our students into school. Once our students begin to enter our buildings, we will make decisions based on our actual internal data (represented on the dashboard) and area data during weekly data reviews and meetings with the Washtenaw County Health Department. Data will be tracked according to the following [dashboard](#). Updates on our plans for Returning to the Buildings are available on our new [Return to Buildings Page](#).

Thank you for your continued support and we're so excited to see our kids in school starting October 8th and 9th!!!

Take care and Go Dreads!

Sincerely,

Christopher Timmis, Ed.D.  
Superintendent