

Board of Directors Study Session FAQ's

Q. Has the Board considered requesting a waiver to the educational hour requirement from the state to ease the demands of screen time for school?

A. The State Board of Education has made changes to the types of instruction and learning that count as instructional hours. We do not have to apply for any waivers in this area as a result.

Q. Will staff be required to work in the buildings during distance learning or is it their choice?

A. There are definitely advantages to having teachers in their classrooms and our buildings will be open for staff who wish to teach from their rooms. Some work can only be done onsite and those staff will be required to work from the buildings. Other staff have medical reasons and other things that give them the option of working from home. Once students return to our classroom in large numbers, staff will have to be onsite for instruction. We hope this will be sooner rather than later.

Q. Why does the CDC website recommend schools open for in person learning? Does Pierce County have more data?

A. The CDC is looking at infection rates and making recommendations on a macro level. Our county health department is looking locally and regionally. They are the local agency with the authority to say schools must close, or open, to in person instruction.

Q. How will students who cannot be online during this schedule be supported?

A. We will bring some students into the buildings for instruction in small groups. Guidance from the state asks that we reach out to students furthest from educational justice and ensure they are learning. Students who cannot learn online would fall into this category and would be targeted for extra support.

Q. Will the sessions be recorded for those that have to miss or when families have technology issues?

A. Yes, not everything in every synchronous lesson will be recorded, but students will have access to the recorded instruction they need.

Q. Will students be given individual schedules, such as times and codes for the class sessions? I worry about younger children being able to log in and out of multiple class sessions.

A. Yes these will be provided to students. We also use a single sign-on application called ClassLink that gives students one click access to almost every application they need.

Q. For families with multiple kids in the district, will they be able to have lunch and breaks at the same time?

A. This will depend on the schedules and class times at each school. In some cases yes, and others no.

Q. Is there a concern of too much screen time? Has there been work done on more asynchronous work; direction is given, work is completed in a workbook, and assignments submitted with a picture.

A. Yes, this has been a large topic of discussion over the summer. We tried to build a schedule that made minimizing screen time a priority. There will be times where a student may be on a video conference but not actually watching the screen.

Q. What will testing, assessments and grading be like?

A. Grading and assessment will be similar to last school year before the building closure. The actual tests or assessments students take will vary. There are many ways students can demonstrate understanding than a traditional paper and pencil test.

Q. What percentage of families have both parents working full time?

A. This is information that we feel is important but we do not have a clear picture at this point in time of the real numbers of students in this situation.

Q. Will less homework be assigned given the heavy load on students and families?

A. Homework will vary by grade, and we have to redefine what work gets done during school hours and what work gets done outside of those hours.

Q. Is it possible to have different shifts taken into consideration, as some of us work and are first responders?

A. Yes in that the idea of a shift has been discussed. We are also looking at options to provide opportunities in the evenings for students to connect with teachers and/or paraeducators to get support.

Q. Will schedules change weekly or be the same?

A. Schedules may change depending on the need of the students or their families. Our intent however, is to keep the schedules static as much as possible, unless we are moving between phases of reopening.

Q. Will first graders be able to work on their own or will parents need to do it with them?

A. With our youngest learners, their ability to work independently will vary greatly. All students will need support from their families to be successful in all grades.

Q. What does 5:00pm-10:00pm teaching support for live instruction look like?

A. We are still working this out and want to see what sort of need there is for evening support as we open the school year.

Q. Will the same platforms be used as last year?

A. Yes, for the most part the primary grades will use SeeSaw, the intermediate grades will use Google Classroom, and the middle school will use Schoology.

Q. What specific technology will be given by grade level?

A. Primary grades will use iPads and Chromebooks, the intermediate grades will use Chromebooks, and the middle school will use Windows devices.

Q. Can parents know about lesson plans ahead of time?

A. They can contribute more and prepare if they know what's coming up. Parents will get access to all sorts of learning and lessons with their students. Some of that information may be in advance of the lesson. Once school starts work with your child's teacher.

Q. Will students be getting hard copies of workbooks, such as a first grade math workbook?

A. Yes, in some cases. In other instances students will get electronic copies of learning materials. Since we are not under a stay at home order, as we were in the spring, the intent is to have more paper and pencil resources available, especially for younger students.

Q. What are the dollar amounts for fees by school?

A. Fees and payments will vary by grade level, and will be communicated to families from each school.

Q. Will I need to be actively attending/watching the actual online class time instruction for each of my kids to be able to support them into the asynchronous portions of learning?

A. Not necessarily, most all of the actual instruction will be recorded and available on demand for students and families. Those recordings may not be the exact same things done earlier in the day with the students, but the content and learning will be there for the students.

Q. Will there be weekly communication that helps parents know what students are responsible for each week?

A. Yes, teachers will be in regular communication with students and families about the work they need to be doing.

Q. Does the schedule presented apply to those students who chose the Online Learning Academy/full time distance learning program?

A. Currently, yes, once we move into phase 3 of our reopening plan you may see a change in the times and expectations for students online exclusively compared to students who come to the building.

Q. What will virtual learning look like for hands-on classes such as PE, Art, and Science?

A. Our teachers have been hard at work this summer to make hands on classes and electives even better. Some learning will be accomplished through simulations, and at other times students will get the materials they need from simple household items, and others may be delivered to students' homes to help enrich their learning in these subjects.

Q. How often are the phases being evaluated by the district?

A. We are evaluating our phases and situation with transmission rates weekly at the minimum. We are in regular contact with the Pierce County Department of Health, OSPI, other regional schools, and the Pierce County Emergency Operations Center.

Q. My daughter was in a Title I/lap program at her old school. Will she be placed back in the same program?

A. Yes, if students qualify for extra support from programs like Title or LAP they will receive those services this school year as well.

Q. Will kids be required to have their webcams on?

A. We do not anticipate having a requirement for students to turn on their webcams, however it is best for students to connect with each other and their teachers as much as possible. Having their webcams on does help promote this connecting.

Q. What kind of permissions will parents have for their students' computers when they are sent home? If my son has easy access to YouTube or Cool Math Games, he will be distracted easily.

A. We are exploring some software that will give parents access to filter the content on their students' computers. We are not ready to roll this out just yet. It is likely that the schools would retain control during the school day to ensure students can access all the learning resources. Parents could have control outside of school hours at some point.

Q. Can you explain again how attendance will be managed?

A. We will be tracking student participation in online synchronous learning activities and tracking their progress on assignments and other work. The state has released details for attendance this year and we will follow that guidance. It is available at:

https://www.k12.wa.us/sites/default/files/public/bulletinsmemos/bulletins2020/B064-20_%20Emergency%20Absence%20Rule_.pdf