



GEORGIA ELEMENTARY & MIDDLE SCHOOL
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Date: July 20, 2020

To: Georgia Families and Community

From: Julie Conrad and Steve Emery

Re: School Reopening Update

We hope that this finds you well and you are finding ways to enjoy your summer. As we are planning for the upcoming school, we will be sending a weekly email to communicate about both what decisions have been made and ways in which we will be soliciting your feedback. The four principles guiding our decisions as we move forward are: creating the best possible conditions to minimize possible exposure of COVID-19; connecting with students; ensuring equity; and improving on lessons learned this past spring.

We also want to acknowledge that we know that the decisions and communications that we share with you each week may create some stress and will most likely create many questions. Every week we will open a survey where you can share concerns or important questions that remain unanswered.

Opening School Structure:

Our survey results showed that both 79% of our Georgia parents and 74% of our GEMS staff felt favorable about a hybrid model to start our fall. With this data and current health guidelines, the FWSU administrative team has decided to open this fall with a hybrid model.

The benefits of the hybrid model:

- Create a consistent schedule for our students, staff, and families.
- Enhance staff's ability to connect with students to build relationships and support students
- Minimize the number of students in the building and on the buses to support greater safety measures and physical distancing.

The FWSU hybrid model will have students participating in their academics five days a week: two days in-person and three days virtually.

- In-person schooling: Students in each grade will attend in-person schooling for two days either on Monday and Tuesday or Thursday and Friday. It is our intention that siblings would attend in-person schooling on the same days.
- Virtual/remote schooling: Students will participate virtually or remotely for the remaining three days. We will build off lessons learned this spring to offer a variety of tasks and support for their virtual/remote days.
- Staff will work in the school with students on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday of each week. Staff and students will work from home Wednesdays to allow for deep cleaning of the building between the cohorts of students.

Safety and Wellbeing:

In order to reduce the risks of viral transmission, there are a number of procedures, protocols, and supplies that we are in the process of updating.

The following requirements are Vermont State Health requirements:

Health Screening: All staff and students will be required to participate in (and satisfactorily pass) a health screening prior to entering the building. They will be asked two questions about their health and their temperature will be taken upon arrival. We will provide more details in future memos.

Facial Coverings: All staff and students are REQUIRED to wear facial coverings (masks or approved shields) while in the building, as well as outside where physical distancing cannot be maintained.

Students should bring three clean masks with them to school each day. We have a limited supply of reusable masks to provide students if you are unable to provide them and will have disposable masks in each classroom should a student need more than three on a given day.

We will be working to maximize outdoor learning activities where students can safely remove their masks. We understand that we need to provide opportunities for all students to have a break from wearing a mask during the day. We highly encourage you to start practicing proper mask wearing at home and increasing their stamina for wearing a mask for a longer period of time.

Additional Supplies and Safety Requirements:

Busing and Arrival: We strongly encourage families to transport their children to and from school when possible without the use of busing. This will help us further minimize the number of children on a bus and maximize our ability to maintain social distancing for those students who must ride the bus.

Cleaning Supplies: All classrooms will be provided with additional cleaning supplies, hand sanitizer, lotion, and other personal protective equipment (PPE). We are in the process of installing signage; acquiring and installing hygiene barriers for common areas and dividers for classroom spaces where needed.

Common Spaces: In order to minimize possible exposure, students will not be able to utilize common spaces with their class including the gymnasium, cafeteria, library, and UA rooms. Specialists and UA Teachers will move to the classrooms. We will utilize outdoor spaces as much as possible to support the physical and mental health of our students and staff. Meals will be brought to the classroom.

Field Trip and Visitors: Unfortunately, we will be unable to participate in field trips, nor will be allowed to accept parent visitors or volunteers within the school building until further notice.

Family/Community Advisory Group:

We are forming a Family/Community Advisory Group. This will allow us to meet with our community stakeholders using Zoom to meet several times between now and the start of school. Our intention is to engage with this group to:

- Share our best thinking and hear feedback
- Ground our decisions based on the best available science
- Focus on our students social & emotional and academic needs and growth
- Focus on student, staff, and community safety and wellbeing

If you are interested in serving on the Family/Community Advisory Group, please indicate so in the survey (link below).

We will continue to provide updates. Again, we know that all of this information is overwhelming and you likely have many questions. Please understand that we are continuing to pursue ways to accommodate families and are seeking flexible solutions and supports. Please use this survey form, [Weekly Update: Family Feedback Form](#), to share your questions with us.

Thank you for your ongoing support as we navigate through this unique time. We hope that as we communicate new information each week, it will allow you to share in the excitement with your students for a healthy and safe return to school this fall.

Respectfully,

Julie Conrad and Steve Emery
Georgia Elementary Middle School Principals