

FAQs – Reopening Meeting 8/19/20 @ 6:00 p.m.

QUESTION – What will the parent drop off look like?

ANSWER – Parents will drop off in the front loop of each building. We have made a slight adjustment in that drop offs will occur before buses arrive. Specific times are being adjusted and we will announce that soon.

QUESTION – What are the plans for BOCES students?

ANSWER – CTE students will follow the green/gold cohort. On days they are scheduled to be in school, they will go to BOCES. On days they are scheduled for remote learning, they will do remote learning.

If you have a student who attends an off-campus learning program at BOCES each day, they will attend each day. Please contact Mrs. Knapp, Director of Special Programs for specifics regarding your student. She may be reached at 656-4161, extension 683.

QUESTION – Please explain the “isolation room” where students will be placed if they have a fever.

ANSWER – If a student arrives at school with a fever, or develops a fever during school hours, they must be sent home immediately. While waiting they will be kept separate in a room adjacent to the health office with a staff member until parents arrive. We are required by the state to have a separate room for students who have a fever of 100 or above. This is to keep possible COVID cases separate, or isolated, from the general population.

QUESTION- Will the start times change in the morning?

ANSWER – Yes, we are adjusting the start and end times slightly to accommodate social distancing and allow time to screen students upon arrival. As of right now, parent drop off will be somewhere between 7:30 – 7:50 a.m., followed by the arrival of buses. Bus pick-up times will be slightly later than last year by about 10 – 15 minutes. Dismissal times will also change slightly and be staggered. More information to come.

QUESTION – What will remote schedules be like?

ANSWER – Our model will be on our web page on Friday, August 21st. It will differ by grades.

QUESTION – Will students who drive to school have time to drop off a sibling at the elementary buildings and still get to the HS on time?

ANSWER It should work, but we are still ironing out the timing details.

QUESTION - What if parents are separated and do not agree on what type of learning is best for the child?

ANSWER – We have posed this question to our attorneys in the past. Please work it out and select a learning model by Friday, August 21st. Keep in mind that if remote learning is selected, it will be a commitment for the full marking period which is 13 weeks for elementary and 10 weeks for middle/high school.

QUESTION – What method is used to select the cohorts?

ANSWER – We are using family units as a priority when grouping students. Cohorts should be available next week.

QUESTION – What are you doing to help ease the anxiety for young students just starting school?

ANSWER – We may have a “soft” opening for our very young students, giving them additional support and time to adjust. Hopefully this will help ease anxiety. We cannot do scheduling right now as the main system schools use to do schedules was so inundated with requests their system crashed. We have been without it for approximately one week but are hopeful they will get things up and running very soon so we can start scheduling.

QUESTION – Is there an alternative to the Greene Central School app other than a smart phone? Specifically, for the screening process which is to be done at home by parents before sending children to school?

ANSWER – There may be a web version. We will look into that.

QUESTION – What is going on with fall sports?

ANSWER – Initially, fall sports were delayed until September 21. Today there was an announcement that Governor Cuomo will be addressing school sports soon. We await direction. We very much want our students to have opportunities for sports and other co-curricular activities. That being said, our main focus right now is trying to have the best opening we can while addressing all safety protocols.

QUESTION – Will our students be using disinfectant to clean desks?

ANSWER – No. Staff will clean desks between uses.

QUESTION – In the spring when school was closed, the high school access center online was disabled. Will this be available again this fall?

ANSWER – Yes it will be available for parents this fall as we return to our traditional grading system. When we did an emergency closing in the spring it was a very different situation than we will have when reopening. We have had an opportunity to plan and secure new learning formats for staff and students.

QUESTION – How are you planning to help students emotionally?

ANSWER – Our pupil personnel team is working and planning very hard to provide emotional support to all students. We recognize that this is a common issue for students and adults and that it is very important.

QUESTION - We understand that remote learning will be a commitment of one marking period. What will we need to do if we want to switch to in-person attendance for the second marking period?

ANSWER – The district will require a two-week notice of the change.

QUESTION – Will there be virtual meet and greets for teachers to get to know students?

ANSWER – To be honest, we are so focused on safely opening school, and working so many hours to get this the best it can be, this was not a consideration. We will do our best to see if we can accommodate this in some fashion once our immediate concerns and requirements are dealt with.

QUESTION – If a student begins school with in-person learning, can we make a switch to remote learning in the middle of a marking period?

ANSWER – Yes. It is much more difficult to do safety plans for a student attending in-person than remotely. Students will be allowed to switch to remote without waiting out the entire marking period.

QUESTION – Will special education students go four or five days?

ANSWER – Special education scenarios will vary greatly. Please contact Mrs. Nicole Knapp, 656-4161 extension 683 for specifics regarding your child's schedule.

QUESTION – Will school have masks if a student doesn't have their own?

ANSWER – Yes. The district will have disposable masks for students who do not have one when the board they bus or arrive at school. However, it is very important that parents try to find a mask style that their children are comfortable with. It is very difficult to focus and learn if you are wearing a mask that isn't comfortable. Once you find a style that is comfortable for your student, we urge you to buy extras to make this as easy as possible on the students.

QUESTION – If my student attends an all-day BOCES program and typically has been picked up at home, may I drive my student to the high school to get on the bus?

ANSWER – Yes.

QUESTION – If a child has a long-term illness but is able to do remote learning, are they allowed to do so?

ANSWER – Yes, if a child is out for an extended time due to illness, we will be able to provide remote learning. We will not switch students to remote for short-term illnesses.

QUESTION – Many area schools are now delaying their opening date. Will GCS also delay?

ANSWER – At this time we are hopeful that we will be ready to safely open on time. However, as we have all learned, things change rapidly pertaining to COVID and state directives. If there is a change we will post the information to our web page and app immediately.

QUESTION – On the first day of school, could you show students a video on the safety procedures?

ANSWER – Actually we will be teaching safety protocols and procedures for at least the first week. Proper hygiene, social distancing, mask wearing, etc., are the foundation for keeping our students and staff safe.

QUESTION – When will high school students get their schedule?

ANSWER – Typically students do not get their class schedules until opening day. We will be assigning teachers and cohorts next week.

QUESTION – Will students have lockers?

ANSWER – No. Students will keep their belongings in a backpack and keep it with them.

QUESTION – Will students be changing for physical education in the locker rooms?

ANSWER – No. We will not be having students change for physical education class at this time.

QUESTION – Will parents get paid or get a tax break if they drive their kids to school?

ANSWER – No. Our efforts to reduce numbers on the bus are for safety and social distancing protocols. We still have the same expenses of running the bus, paying the driver, buying fuel, etc. The expenses don't change based on how many students are on the bus.

An additional concern is that the state just reminded us that they still may reduce our state aid by 20% during the school year. That is not good news.

QUESTION – On the app it says home access is off.

ANSWER – Yes. It will not activate until school opens.

QUESTION – You mentioned the possibility of a soft opening for UPK and Kindergarten. What is a soft opening?

ANSWER – A soft opening might be having only half of the students come in the first day and half the second day. This would allow for more support and individual attention while students get to know the staff and surroundings. We are considering this for UPK, K, and perhaps 1st. Details will be forthcoming.

QUESTION – Will my first grader bring home an iPad?

ANSWER – No. iPads that are used in the classroom would only go home with a student if he/she has a long-term illness that requires remote instruction.

QUESTION – Is the school adding more staff members to help keep kids safe?

ANSWER – We are not. Instead, we have been creative in getting support staff members to volunteer to cross train and cover other jobs. For example, a bus monitor may be done with the route and be available to work in the school until the next bus run. We have remarkable staff members at G.C.S. and they all put our students first. Everyone is stepping up to help out where it is most needed.

QUESTION – My child takes medication. How will I drop it off?

ANSWER – This process has not changed much. Please contact the appropriate school nurse to make arrangements.

QUESTION – If a family member has COVID, should the kids stay home?

ANSWER – We are working very closely with the Department of Health. They will be considering each situation individually and making the decisions. They recognize that every scenario can be unique and will act accordingly.

QUESTION – Can parents request a specific cohort?

ANSWER – If you have a special circumstance, such as a unique work schedule, please contact the appropriate principal and explain. Clearly, we cannot honor general parental requests for cohort placement due to the difficulty of the process. We will use family units as our first criteria.

QUESTION – My child has seasonal allergies. Will this cause confusion with other illnesses?

ANSWER – Our school nurses know our students very well, and typically are aware of who has allergies, etc. You may contact the appropriate nurse to share your child's specific information.

Final note from Mr. Calice – Even the best laid plans can change. We have devoted thousands of man hours to making our opening plan the best and safest it can be. Please be patient with us and support each other. We are in this together.