



Q&A – RE-OPENING

We are pleased to answer these questions and realize that there will undoubtedly be many more (which is great). Please do not hesitate to reach out directly to me either via email or phone. We are here to help! Rich

Questions from 08.13.20 Board of Education Meeting:

Why do children's temperatures need to be recorded? **We are asking our parents to record student's temperature and conduct wellness checks at home based upon guidance from the DOH and NYSED. We are utilizing an APP. To help in this process We all have to do our part to keep everyone safe.**

What decision was made about re-opening? Are the children attending school in person? Same schedule? Or Virtual? **Please read the plan and the one pager. The simple answer to your questions is yes. We have developed an educational plan that utilizes one schedule...same schedule, whether on site or virtual. If we transition as a district entirely to remote instruction this same schedule will be utilized.**

If we opt for virtual schooling, will we be allowed to opt back into the classroom? **Yes, we will be flexible to the greatest extent possible.**

What will virtual schooling look like? Is it a classroom teacher juggling both in class and virtual or will there be designated teachers assigned for virtual? **We have built this schedule so that it is the same whether in class or remote. All students will be assigned to a classroom teacher. These assignments are based upon reduced class sizes and social distancing, so the teacher to student ratio is safe and manageable. If a family choose the remote option they can expect the following: Remote Learning Overview Additionally, a separate teacher or teachers assistant will be assigned to help your child access materials, complete assignments and get the most out of the instruction as they can.**

Will middle school students have use of lockers? **Yes, but access will be controlled/staggered.**

In the reopening plan it states, "face coverings to be worn by staff and students at all times where feasible". What does feasible cover? **There are times that**

masks can't be worn or may be removed: lunch, outdoors and socially distanced, Etc. Classrooms, indoor activities and hallways are non-negotiable.

What is the protocol when a kid gets sick with other infectious diseases similar to COVID? Until a determination is made to the contrary, we will treat and ask that parents view all COVID like symptoms as the real thing. It will then be up to a physician to indicate otherwise. Protocols are referenced in the DOH guidance.

Please walk us through the points that makes Pocantico ready to go full schedule? Looking for assurance? I get it, this is new and scary stuff. Please take a moment to read our plan, the one pager and the updates that I have provided. They are on our website. Please give me a call if you need some additional information. Additionally here is an informative document on what a day could/will look like for our students: [School Life Overview](#).

And finally, here is a blurb on what we have done to our facility:

A safe and supportive educational environment is the cornerstone of education. It allows us to be confident that health and safety is considered and ensured. To that end we have done the following (to date):

- Inspected every HVAC unit to ensure that they are working and operating efficiently
- Installed MERV-13 (sp) filters in all air handlers (these are specialized filters that filter out the virus)
- Purchase stand-alone HEPA filters for every classroom. These filters "turn over," the air in a 900sq ft classroom 6 times an hr.
- Purchased 14 kiosk hand sanitizer units. These will be placed at entrances by bathrooms, in the cafeteria etc.
- Purchased safety signage: personal hygiene, mask wearing, hall direction, social distancing, etc. Classroom teachers are also purchasing signage for their classrooms.
- Replaced floors in the middle school wing. All are now the grey faux wood. This allows for easier maintenance and clean up.
- Purchased infrared scanners to aid in temperature checks of staff and students or exhibit COVID related symptoms...or flu for that matter.
- Purchased UVC disinfectant devices to purify large spaces
- Refined our cleaning protocols
- Purchased individual student dividers (see through) to limit germ sharing
- Mapped every classroom to determine Social Distancing Capacity

In short, we are extremely confident that our cleaning protocols and enhanced air quality purification measures will help to ensure that we are able to provide our students/staff with a safe environment to work in.

Is BOCES coming back? If so, what will be the procedures and protocols for them to enter the facility? Yes. They are subject to the same safety policies and procedures though our ability to integrate into our classrooms will be very

limited. Their arrival/dismissal is already individualized and does not interfere with POCO students.

Are we going to speak about the COVID precautions that will be taken at the school? Please see the above questions and the plan, one pager and other communications. Give me a call with any other questions, here to help.

Are there breaks in the schedule for those on remote learning? It will be difficult for remote learners to sit for hours on end continuously. Yes. Our schedule has 10-minute breaks at the end of every "period," for just that reason...whether on site or virtual.

Will there be temperature checks upon arrival? No. Please see the plan. That is the parents responsibility. We will provide a daily app. to help in this process and to allow us to record this information and if necessary, take follow-up action. If they cannot do this, we will help.

Are classes outside something that has been considered or discussed? Yes. Great minds 😊. To help in this we have acquired (thank you Don Booth) two 30x30 tents to help act as outdoor classrooms. This will start small but hopefully grow!

Can my child attend school in a hybrid model? I am not comfortable with a full day schedule? We plan to be as flexible as we can to address family needs.

What are the protocols for a mask break? We are developing a set schedule for this. In short, if inside, enhanced social distancing (utilizing large spaces like the gym), if outside, social distancing.

If we go remote (for any reason) will there be live classes conducted? It is the expectation that a large part of all instructional periods will be synchronous/live.

How are you going to address the social/emotional needs of children who are going to be wearing masks 8 hours a day, sitting behind desks surrounded by plexiglass and socially distanced from teachers and peers? How do we ensure this is actually the best way to learn and stay safe and healthy? Our plan speaks to this and our Student Support Center and the Mental Health and Wellness Committee have been focused on this aspect as well. In short, by making the social/emotional and mental needs of our students our first and primary responsibility. We have to address this before academics.

Will the aftercare program continue? Yes. But will not begin in the first week. All safety measures will apply. Notifications on this will be sent out soon. It is anticipated that there will be additional protocols.

What are the measures for transportation and the safety of the bus drivers and children? Please see the plan and the one pager. Seats directly in back of the

driver will remain open at all times, enhanced PPE, mandated daily health and wellness checks.

What about parents who say the child doesn't have a fever and give them advil/medicine and sends them to school? **We will continue to stress the importance of health and safety measures and our collective responsibility to help keep everyone well.**

Will parents be able to change their decision about remote learning and opting in and out? **Yes. We will be as flexible and understanding as we can.**

What are the remote instruction options for students who are forced to quarantine or who need to stay or are returned home due to being under the weather? **We are employing a same schedule model of instruction whether on site, at home or fully remote. However, if a child is sick, schoolwork is secondary to their wellness, please keep them home and notify our health office. We will help catch them up later.**

How much time will students be outside during any given school day? **As much as the schedule, creativity, spaces and mother nature allows. Mask breaks and recess are non-negotiable options which will occur daily.**

How will you track exposure if someone tests positive? **As indicated in the plan and associated guidance documents we will work with the DOH on this. Additionally, our health app. Helps to monitor this. Information regarding illness is entered into our student management system, this is established protocol.**

If virtual, any training provided for parents to better understand resources? **Yes! We are working on this and expect to have additional resources to share very soon.**

How much time will students be outside during a given school day? **As much as the schedule, creativity, spaces and mother nature allows. Mask breaks and recess are non-negotiable options which will occur daily.**

Is it the plan for the school to transition to remote if we do have a positive COVID case in the school? If so, will there be live teaching for remote learning and how would devices, learning tools provided if short notice? **We will follow all guidance for closure as indicated by the DOH. If we close down it is the expectation that instruction will continue, albeit remotely. We are already a 1x1 district and are lucky and appreciative of the community support that allows us this important component. Devices will be distributed to students at the beginning of the year. Yes, it is the expectation that all instructional periods are taught in a synchronous fashion to the greatest degree possible/practicable.**

Is remote learning an option? I need to know if Pocantico will provide full time virtual/remote learning if I don't want my child to do any in person or will it be

dependent on majority? Please see the plan. We are employing a same schedule model of instruction whether on site, at home or fully remote.

What will physical education look like? Please see the plan. In short, a focus on individual and socially distanced activities. Make the maximum use of the outdoors, embrace mindfulness, lifelong activities, etc. Enhanced social distancing is in place with 12ft margins.

Would cafeteria be running too? Yes, but limited menu, socially distanced and other safety protocols in place. Chef Kassie and her team are all over this.

Will there be live classes or recordings for those who choose remote learning? Please see the plan. We are employing a same schedule model of instruction whether on site, at home or fully remote. So, the expectation is that students would be a part of the class to the greatest degree possible. Additional supports and resources will be available to help assist students remotely.

If we are in a remote learning environment and there are power outages in the district, will that be handled as a snow day for the entire school or would homes without power need to find an alternative way to keep up with the school schedule for that day? Now that is a great question. It will depend upon exposure. If it impacts a large percentage and we are unable to provide a continuity of instruction we will in all likelihood close. If this becomes necessary, we would employ the usual notification systems: email blast, poco app., Instagram, facebook, website, etc. If localized, we will work to catch our students up. Thank you POCO for supporting the generator project.

For physical activities (gym, recess, music, etc.) will students be wearing masks? Will these classes be indoors or outdoors? If inside yes, if outside and socially distanced no. Music mandates additional social distancing measures. We plan to maximize our outdoor spaces.

Will there be extra help to assist younger kids for social distancing? What emotional support or ways to combat 'scariness' or what the new day at school looks like? We are lucky that we have very high (Lots of great professional) staff to student ratios so we believe that yes, we have the staff necessary to help students. Teachers have spoken of the need to do individual and class outreach, Teams/ZOOM meetings, videos, etc. we are supporting all ideas in this regard. The focus, especially at the beginning of the year is on their social/emotion and mental well-being!

Will the three-sided screen on the student's desks apply to Pre-K through 8? Yes.

For students that will be new to the school this year, my daughter is coming in as a new second grader from coming from a very small school, is there a possibility for an acclimation period, or day, for them to settle into this wild new world with plastic dividers and floor markings? We might be the only ones so understand if not something being considered. We love what we are hearing

but just thinking about the “emotional” factor you mentioned. **We are here to help and I am sure we can figure something out. Please call principal Brown.**

If a student is doing e-learning, at what point can the parents change to in-class learning? **We are here to help and will be flexible to the greatest degree possible. Communication is the key here.**

Do classroom sections become pods which do not interact without pods, creating cohorts? **Cohorts are based upon grade levels. Interaction, to the greatest extent possible is limited to grade specific cohorts.**

If a student or staff member is diagnosed with SARS-COV2, does the school require that this is reported to the school and that measures are taken to minimize the chances of passing on the virus? We are guided by the NYS DOH in this.

<https://health.westchestergov.com/images/stories/PDF/faqschoolreopening082020.pdf>

<https://health.westchestergov.com/2019-novel-coronavirus>

Are you hiring new teachers for the new class sections that are being added? Yes. We will and are hiring new teachers for the necessary sections.

Additionally, we are lucky that we already have some great certified people in our school who already know the kids and parents. The BOE anticipated these additional expenditures and we built them into our budget.

Have you received any guidance about if a child/children are quarantined due to potential exposure, do others in the household have to as well even if there are no symptoms and vice versa? **Please reference the DOH guidance documents on this. There are specific protocols for many situations. Your need to quarantine will be based upon these established protocols. Schools are notified by the DOH of any cases. The above links are great, easily understood resources.**

When will the model be decided on? **It is, please reference the plan.**

Will the cohorts be divided by grade or by individual classroom? **Grade. Remember our average grade size is 35**

What will the staggered schedule for drop off and pickup be? **We will be sending out transportation information prior to the start of school.**

While you can control for cohorts within the school, how will you control for it outside of school and within in the community? **We can only control what we can control. We will continue to work with our community to help keep everyone safe.**

What if you can drive your kids most days but possibly not every day? **Thank you for helping. Indicate that you need transportation so we can save a seat.**

Will there be any testing for the students and/or staff prior to the start of school or during the school year? **We cannot mandate that, but we will continue to recommend best practices and help curate resources.**

If we drive our child to school, will there be staggered times we will be asked to drop them off? **No, but when you arrive staff will help to direct students and keep them socially distanced. When picking up students will have assigned socially distanced areas to wait until you arrive.**

If transportation needs change down the road (if no longer available to drive child to school) will it be feasible to adjust? **Yes. We are here to help and value working together to solve issues. However, there are no “social,” transportation options, i.e. visits to friends’ houses, etc. Sorry, we really do hate to say no 😞**

How do the teachers feel about the plan? Are they given the choice just as parents on going remote? **Our staff members are awesome and are valued members on all our teams/committees. Many of these ideas, plans and considerations come directly from them! They, like all of us are nervous and mindful of the needs of everyone: students, families, their kids/families, etc. That is why it is so important that we understand that they are committed to all of us and we in turn must support all of them! Staff members whose health or family needs may require additional consideration are being supported to the greatest extent possible. Together we are strong!**

Should/could you consolidate a list where parents can sign up to help with lunch distribution, hall monitoring, outdoor social distancing, other classroom support, etc. potentially consider where we as digitally up-skill other parents that are struggling with virtual tools? **Thank you so much and yes, we will work on this; understanding that we are also limiting outside exposure to the greatest degree possible. Thank you for this suggestion.**

Are parents supposed to report if they have an exposure at work? **Follow NYS DOH guidelines. When in doubt, stay out!**

Can that responsibility be built into the parents’ code of conduct? Expectation to report. **We can communicate this.**

I don’t think it’s smart to rely on parents to report their child’s temperature. That should be monitored by the district. **We are following the recommendations of the respective agencies. While I appreciate your opinion, and this has been a source of much discussion we also have to be careful to not put policies and procedures in place that could actually harm our kids. The following is a good article:**

<https://www.aappublications.org/news/2020/06/26/schoolreopening062620>

What happens if a student’s family does not complete the form that day? Is the child sent home? **Parents are contacted and reminded to complete form and asked if there is any reason why their child should not be in school. If**

necessary, student maybe isolated, temperature checked etc. in school. This will undoubtedly be a learning process and our procedures will be modified as necessary.

Will classes be set up so bus routes/local living arrangements are grouped to limit extended exposure? Bus routes are already established via locality however it is not possible to base them solely on grade level cohorts.

Will the number of children that are outside at recess at any given time be restricted more than usual? This is a concerning time of day for me because there seems to be a higher likelihood of not maintaining social distancing during this time? Yes. We have lots of greenspace that we will utilize. Recess times will vary.

Can we decide to bring our children to school for now and then switch to bus later? Yes.

What happens if a parent is exposed and gets tested by the testing delay is days or weeks? In the meantime, their kid is going to school every day exposing everyone else. DOH guidelines cover this. To me, when in doubt stay out. We will be governed by a safety-first concept.

I read many parents of the document but did not see: if we opt for virtual learning, is there a different teacher working with our child? How long before we are permitted to opt back into the classroom? If a family opts in the classroom to begin, are we able to go virtual at any moment if we feel in-person isn't working a child? Lastly, what protocols are allowed for handling a child who is having a breakdown/tantrum? We are prepared to be as flexible as possible to help our students. There is no time limit or set date for choosing to go to either model. Yes, the teacher of record will also work with your child in a synchronous fashion. It is the expectation that your child follows the schedule provided them. Remember, this is the same schedule whether they are on campus or remote. Additionally, a separate teacher or teachers assistant will be assigned to help your child access materials, complete assignments and get the most out of the instruction as they can. Our student support team have personnel available to work with and counsel students on both a group and individual basis. To be clear, the most important part of this is a focus on the social/emotional and mental well-being of our kids. We have the staff in place to help!

The recent experience with the storm has taught us that we cannot always rely either on the power grid (not much to be done about that in the short term), and with respect to internet, how is the school going to deal with student that are on remote learning if internet access is compromised at the student's home? Well, first of all thank you POCO for supporting the generator project! If district wide it would be handled much in the same manner as a "snow day," all classes cancelled, and we pick up where we left off. If it is more localized we will work with individual families to provide the support necessary to "catch

up.” If parents do not have internet access, we will provide district supported “hot-spots.” It is vital that everyone have connectivity.

The bathrooms are being cleaned 2x per day, is that enough? They receive a deep cleaning 2x daily but receive generalized cleaning on an ongoing basis. Custodial routines have been developed to ensure that bathrooms are checked for cleanliness and given a surface cleaning hourly.

Questions from our online form:

Where do the students have lunch? Are the school lunches pre-packed so the students can grab and go?

It is anticipated that our students will eat with their cohorts (grade level) in the cafeteria, or other designated areas including outdoor spaces and possibly the gymnasium. Some classes maybe assigned periodically to eat in their assigned classrooms. Meals will be pre-packed and designated for student pick-up.

How can the students keep social distance in the classrooms, hallway, or cafeteria if all students are coming back to school at the same time? 2. Will the students be provided with dividers on the desks? Will they be provided with wipes for their desks if they move to different classrooms? 3. Will the student be provided with an individual set/packet of art supplies or individual computer when they go to art class or are, they going to share the supplies or computers? 4. Is the school shutting down if a student or teacher/ staff is diagnosed? 5. How does the school ensure deep cleaning to the classrooms, cafeteria and facilities? 6. Will the school consider a hybrid mode where the students are divided into two groups and come to school half the time and take virtual lessons the other half of the time? 7. For the students who choose fully virtual study, who's going to teach them? Is there a special program for them? 8. Are there any route directions in the hallways? 8. What can we as parents do to help the teachers and staff with PPE or other items of their interests?

As indicated in the plan all classrooms will; be set up to ensure social distancing. All desks will have student dividers. Wipes and cleaning supplies are available for all classrooms. Our crews will clean classrooms where other students need to travel.

If we choose virtual at first, do we have an chance to opt into in-person instruction at a later date? And vice versa?

We understand that these are huge decisions for families and will be as flexible as possible to meet needs. So, yes, the potential is there to switch (within reason of course:)).

If we choose virtual, does my child have any opportunity for help if they don't understand something? If they are struggling with a topic, can they get any help remotely?

While virtual instruction is not the same as being in the building, we have built into our schedule times that students can receive some additional help and guidance by school personnel.

If we choose in-person, do we have the option to keep our child home and log in remotely on occasion if they are not well? Or more often if we choose to?

We want to be flexible to help families. IF a student is sick, I would recommend foregoing instruction until they are better. To be clear it is not a "pick and choose," in that we would have a hard time creating a continuity of an educational plan if there was too much movement.

Will students that are learning remotely be graded on the same scale as students learning in-person?

Yes, to the greatest degree possible, though the instrument or methodology used to assess learning maybe different.

If children are not able to follow the social distancing and mask rules, how will this be handled?

Younger students will be counseled, parents contacted etc. If it is outright refusal or insubordination (which I do not expect) then it will be treated as a serious disciplinary infraction. Obviously, we can't have someone on our school campus who puts us all at risk.

I selected for my son to take the bus but if necessary, we can drive him. There was no option for this on the forms, should I alert someone just in case space is needed on the bus?

Thank you for your willingness to help! If you feel that your child will need transportation, even occasionally, please indicate "yes." If we need to reduce further, we will put out another "call to arms." Thanks again!

1. Are the students from the same family taking the same bus instead of being assigned to different buses according to their grades? 2. Do the students have assigned seats on the bus? Thank you!

Buses lists will be compiled with no more than 2/3 capacity. Families will ride the same bus in the same fashion that they have in the past. Yes, there will be mandated assigned seating.