

Ringgold School District

Parent Questions

FAQ 3

1. Will students with disabilities still receive their IEP help when they go back?

Yes, all students will continue to receive the supports associated with their Individualized Education Plans. If the IEP team would determine for any reason that supports need to change, the IEP team will convene a meeting. The parents, who are part of that team, will be invited to that meeting. As always, please do not hesitate to contact your building principal if you have concerns about your child's IEP or services.

2. I've seen a few people asking if there will be orientations (K, 5th, 9th). Will it be in person or virtual? Do we have any dates set?

We recognize the importance of orientations for students transitioning into Kindergarten, or from elementary to middle school, and from middle school to high school. The District has planned virtual orientations for each and the dates, which will also be posted on the website, are as follows:

RHS 9th grade orientation/new student orientation 8/26/20

RMS 5th grade orientation/new student orientation 8/25/20

K orientation 8/27/20

Each orientation will be virtual and will include tours of the buildings. Recordings will be available so that they can be viewed following those dates as well.

3. Will there be any type of modifications, such as HEPA filters, added to the ventilation systems or any type of in-classroom air cleaners?

Building and Grounds has been working with our architects and engineers to examine our HVAC systems and to make appropriate filter upgrades where applicable. The Building and Grounds team continues to work on ensuring that there is filtration and continued air exchange in the classrooms.

4. I understand that bus drivers will not and cannot check temperatures prior to boarding. I'm concerned with if the child does have a fever and or sick, I feel the child unfortunately has spread the potential virus to all the students on that bus. I understand that when they arrive temperatures will be checked but the students exposed will not be showing signs yet of possibly contracting the illness on the bus and then upon passing the temp check they are then in the school spreading to more children they come in contact with.

Performing the screening at schools exceeds the guidelines of the DOH and the CDC. Both recommend that the screening occur at home. Both the DOH and the CDC mention the logistical constraints of screening on the bus. The District is following the assignment of seats recommendations, as well as the recommendations for cohorting siblings together. Parents are permitted to provide transportation to school if they are able and as an alternative to school transportation. We are asking that families take their child's temperature before leaving the house each morning. All students must wear a face covering on the bus. Each bus will have extra masks, should a child forget theirs.

- 5. The notion of 2 kids to seat a on a bus and no seats between is negligent in my opinion. Why separate the kids in school but allow such close proximity to and from on the buses?**

Students will be socially distanced on the buses, to the greatest extent feasible. The CDC and DOH have affirmed that wearing a mask restricts the transmission of COVID, and children are required to wear a mask on the bus. The DOH also specifically indicated in their webinar with the Secretary of Health, that a face shield is also acceptable. We do understand that some parents may have concerns and will elect to transport their child to school. This is acceptable and we appreciate your support.

- 6. Is there going to be an intro to Kindergarten night for all the children starting Kindergarten? Some of these children haven't even set foot in a school setting and of course everything will be so different. This is a very scary time for these children and it's going to be worse when they can't even see a smiling face from the teacher or another classmate because they will be wearing masks!**

This is certainly a difficult time for our students, and their families. We will be holding virtual orientations and will certainly be working to determine how we might be able to provide a 'soft landing' for our Kindergarten students who are entering school for the first time. Any orientation to the buildings must follow the guidelines for indoor gatherings as ordered by the Governor as only classroom instruction has been deemed to be exempt from those orders.

- 7. Will the Kindergarten children still learn how to write letters and numbers? Sounds to me that everything will be done on a Chromebook! They need to learn how to write from a teacher! These kids listen to their teachers better than their parents when it comes to anything school related. Virtual learning is awful, they don't want to do the work at home!**

Yes, Kindergarten students will still learn how to write letters and numbers! While we will not be transmitting papers back and forth between students and teachers, students may have their own pencils, pens and papers to use in school. These items will not be shared. In instances where any manipulatives are needed and will be used, they will be assigned to a specific student and only used by that student. At the MS and HS, students may have their own notepad (or notebook) on which to take notes, but assignments and information will be provided and submitted electronically in order to reduce any concerns about transmission through paper.

8. I have a child in third grade and a child starting in Kindergarten this year. Will both of my children be assigned to the same seat on the bus?

Yes.

9. I heard that third grade is going to only have 4 teachers this year and that there will be 25 students per room. Every year since Kindergarten some classes had 5 classrooms because they are a big class. Why is the District adding more students to class under these regulations?

The District cares very much about students and staff. The District started with 20 students per class in K,1,2 and 22-23 in grades 3,4.

RESS has 5 third grade teachers.

RESN has 4 third grade teachers. The average is 22-23 student per classroom if all students choose Option 1, which they have not. Based on our current numbers, and based on parent elections, there will be far less than 22 in any class.

10. I am a working parents and I must send both of my children back to school. I cannot rely on an elderly family member (who has no idea how to even turn a Chromebook on) to make sure my children can navigate through their day.

The brick and mortar option may be the best option as it provides the opportunity for students to be in school with their teachers. Option 2, also allows students to receive the 'live' support from their teachers during the day. This may also be a viable option based on the information provided.

11. With the requirement of facemasks are students required to wear eye shields for coverage?

Shields have been purchased for teachers and grades K-2. We have also purchased masks. There will not be a requirement for all students. There will, however, be an emphasis on teaching students the importance of following safe health expectations. Additionally, parents may choose to have their child wear a face shield or eye protection.

12. There are many schools pushing their start dates back to an even later date. Has Ringgold considered doing the same? Or have you considered doing the first and second 9 weeks virtually?

The District has considered all possibilities and are keeping the diverse needs of our families in mind as we prepare for the start of the 20-21 school year. The start date was pushed back from the initially proposed start date and we continue to monitor the rate of transmission for our County and neighboring Counties. The newly released guidelines mentioned in the attached letter use the 5% positivity as a standard. Our County is below that standard.

13. Why don't we have a true hybrid option? Many of our neighboring districts have this an option.

Many of the districts offering a hybrid option do not have the ability to follow recommended mitigation efforts within their buildings with the number of students in attendance. Ringgold is fortunate to have options where students may attend full-time should their parents elect that option.

We continue to have a handful of questions regarding the hybrid option and know that there are people who feel strongly for and against this option. We haven't ruled this out. If percentages change and we need to do this to accomplish the 6-ft social distancing, or if there are changes in the DOH guidelines, we will continue to revisit this option.

14. Are you going to conduct another survey as the first was completed at the onset of the summer and now guidance has changed, again. I may have different answers now than I did then!

The student registration form does function as a means of gathering information. Unfortunately, as the guidance changes frequently, it is not feasible to poll the school community with each change. We will, however, be sending out another survey to gather information about transportation and other information that will aid in our continued planning.

15. Should I wait until the August board meeting to make up my mind with what option is best? Are plans going to change again?

We would ask that you complete your election form by Friday August 14th. This will aid us greatly in planning for students and staff. The three-option plan has been scrutinized repeatedly and preparations are being finalized. The three options provide a significant amount of flexibility for families, which was an important goal in our planning.

16. I would like as much information as possible about option 3- The IU plan. What extra help will be available for students?

The IU program is taught by IU teachers that may teach during the day at another district. Assistance will be provided in the evenings rather than during the school day. The programming is 'asynchronous' meaning that students watch pre-recorded videos and then complete work independently. More information is forthcoming for families and will be placed on the website and sent to parents who have elected that option.

17. Would Option 3 be more of a challenge for my children since, as I am reading it, it seems that lessons can be molded to each child's learning capabilities?

While it does allow for greater flexibility, Option 3 is asynchronous and will require a more self-directed learner. Option 3 does allow a greater level of flexibility within a week than the other choices. This may be ideal for students and families who would struggle to login live with their classmates on a more formal schedule. As with all online teaching platforms, coursework is individualized as much as possible; yet it does not typically equate to the same learning environment as the traditional classroom.

18. I will need 2 Chromebooks for both of my children. Will there be carrying cases provided for transport to and from school? I will have a kindergartner and third grader, what happens if they accidentally leave them on the bus or they drop it and break it? Or set it down and misplace it? How will they even be able to tell that it is theirs? Will their names be on it?

We will be working to distribute Chromebooks in the first couple of days of school. A request form is attached to the letter accompanying this FAQ sheet. We will be asking for more specific information on the sheet. If you attend the traditional option, you will still need a Chromebook. Each Chromebook and the corresponding serial number information will be registered to the specific student to whom it is assigned.

