



The Young Explorers Back-to-School Plan was presented to the community by Jenna Duffy, Assistant Director of Student Services, on July 20. Parents were encouraged to submit questions to YoungExplorers2020@northbrook28.net. The Board of Education held a special meeting July 21 to review and discuss the plan. This plan is a work in progress and adjustments will be made along the way. You can review the plan by downloading the [YE Back To School Plan 2020](#).

This document will address questions provided by families through the YE FAQ email as well as relevant information from the Board of Education meeting.

Change in School Calendar

As part of the preparation for the reopening of school, the Illinois State Board of Education is allowing school districts five additional teacher institute days for planning and preparing for education during the pandemic. District 28 Board of Education approved moving the start of K-8 student attendance to Monday, Aug. 24. **The Young Explorers start date will be Tuesday, August 25.** Teachers will report to work on Monday, Aug. 17. This will not add days to the end of the school year under the ISBE provision. The last day of school is tentatively scheduled for Wednesday, June 2, 2021.

YE Kick-Off

The YE Kick-Off event planned for Tuesday, August 11 will be cancelled. We are currently working on a new, fun way to connect the YE community that complies with current safety standards.

Meet-n-Greet

We will continue to have time for students to meet their teachers prior to school starting. Details of this event are still being worked on and we will send out more information as soon as they are completed.

Overview

District 28 has designed a choice-based option for families: either daily onsite in-person instruction or daily remote instruction. District 28 is fortunate to have four spacious campuses that allow for physically distanced instruction to accommodate any families who

choose on-site learning. We are following the guidance of the Illinois State Board of Education, the Centers for Disease Control, and the Illinois Department of Public Health in setting up our learning spaces and developing our safety procedures for students and staff.

Questionnaire

Parents need to complete [a questionnaire](#) for each child by noon July 28 to select remote or in-person learning.

We will continue to share details as further guidance is provided by state authorities and as procedures and processes continue to be developed and modified.

Decision Making

1. How should families decide? Who most needs in-person? Remote? Is there guidance for those in neither group?

This is a personal decision for each family to make. Parents know their children and family situation best. Our goal is to provide as much information as we can so they can make an informed decision. The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) states in their latest guidance that “schools and districts are encouraged to provide completely in-person instruction for all students in Phase 4, provided that the school is able to comply with the capacity limits and implement social distancing measures... while keeping health and safety as the number one priority.”

If returning all students is not possible, then schools should prioritize as follows: the highest need for in-person learning is for students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), Section 504 Plans, or those who receive English Learner services; the second-most important group to return to in-person learning with safety and prevention measures in place are those children under age of 13 and those who had greater difficulty learning remotely. Parents may also want to consider if a child did well with remote learning. Remote learning provides the strongest risk mitigation for those with a health risk.

2. Will the district consider exceptional circumstances for switching?

We understand there may be extraordinary circumstances that warrant a review of a child's placement. Changes may be allowed, but only under extenuating circumstances, if space is available and if inequities are not created. Also, students with an IEP or high-risk medical need may need additional considerations which, if necessary, would be determined by the child's educational team in collaboration with parent(s)/guardian(s).

3. If a family chooses to change their child's placement for January, will they be at a similar point in the curricula/standards?

Yes. Because both the remote learning and in-person programs are run by district teachers and administrators, we will ensure that students make the same progress in either program. The YE Remote Learning activities will follow the same unit implemented for in-person instruction.

4. Why isn't the district offering a hybrid model, with part-time in-person and part-time remote?

Schools and districts have been encouraged by ISBE to provide completely in-person instruction for all students in Phase 4, provided that the school is able to comply with capacity limits and implement social distancing measures. As the district began evaluating space to ensure social distancing, we determined that we could accommodate all students onsite every day by repurposing some existing areas. If we had been unable to create 6-foot physically distanced learning spaces, then we would have had to consider a hybrid model.

Remote Learning

The goal of remote learning is to provide a comprehensive, at-home learning program that is comparable, to the extent possible, to the onsite learning program. Staff will be assigned to remote learning with curricular materials and learning activities that are appropriate for remote and digital learning.

1. What is an example of how the same learning standards will be met through remote instruction?

Students in both remote learning and onsite instruction will learn the same topics and standards but may have different activities along the way, although they lead to the same outcome. For example, we will be starting the school year with a Health & Safety unit. Students will be involved in measuring activities that develop understanding of 6-foot social distancing. During in-person instruction, the students will create life-size models of themselves, measure them and compare the differences. This same activity can be implemented through remote learning by having the student measure different family members and compare the differences. These activities incorporate the Illinois Early Learning and Development Standards in mathematics for both groups (6.D.ECa, 7.A.ECb, and 7.A.ECc).

2. Will the same Specials (i.e, Motor Magic) be offered for students in remote learning?

At this time, we are still reinventing how Specials will be incorporated into the school day for in-person instruction. Our specialists will be suggesting activities in their learning domains through the YE Activity Grid.

3. What will the remote learning day look like?

Following ISBE guidance from the Spring, early childhood-aged students should anticipate participating in approximately 30-60 minutes of remote learning activities each day. Students will participate in daily Zoom instruction for approximately 15-20 minutes. During their scheduled time, students will log into Zoom and engage in the instruction being provided to students in person. Parents will then be provided follow up activities to do with their child in the eight main areas of development through the YE Activity Grid and Seesaw.

4. How much parent support will be required?

Three- through five-year old students have not yet developed the skills to independently navigate instruction and activities. While students will have their own iPad, parents will need

to remind them of their schedule, help them log into Zoom and remain physically present to assist with their child remaining engaged in the instruction. Additional activities provided through the YE Activity Grid and Seesaw will require full adult preparation and implementation.

5. How will we measure learning?

We will continue to measure students' growth and development based on the performance standards from our classroom assessment system, Teaching Strategies Gold.

6. Will students have access to student support services?

If a student with an IEP or Section 504 Plan participates in remote learning, they will have access to their services. The IEP or 504 team, in collaboration with parent(s)/guardian(s), may need to create or amend an individualized remote learning plan to ensure relevant services and accommodations are implemented in the remote learning environment.

7. Will students have access to English Language (EL) Services?

Students identified as English Language (EL) Learners will have access to supports in remote learning through instructional approaches utilized during Zoom instruction.

In-Person Learning

Safety

The district's in-person learning environment at each school follows the Illinois State Board of Education and the Illinois Department of Public Health Guidelines, including face coverings for all students and staff while they are inside the building; 6-foot physical distancing, as much as possible; no more than 50 students in one space; increased cleaning/disinfecting; no more than 50 students on a bus; and exclusion of students and staff for illness or close contact with a confirmed COVID-19 case.

Face Coverings

1. Is the district providing masks for everyone or just emergency supplies?

Parents are responsible for providing face coverings. Schools will have some disposable masks available as needed.

2. Will there be opportunities to remove face coverings?

Students and staff can remove face coverings when they maintain physical distancing outdoors. Young Explorers will have a dedicated tent that will allow for outdoor time even when it is raining. In addition, when weather permits, Outdoor Classroom time will occur 30 minutes per day. This time has been scheduled in the middle of the school day and will include time for children to play physically-distanced, allowing for a safe break from face coverings.

3. What if my child cannot tolerate a face covering?

While wearing a face covering might feel strange in the beginning, much like any habit, wearing a mask can be learned. YE Staff will include lessons on why we need to wear face coverings and how to wear face coverings safely as part of our Health & Safety unit. In addition, teachers are planning a fun activity to introduce students to safety measures prior to school starting. If your child will not tolerate a face covering, then remote learning might be a better option for them.

4. What if my child refuses to wear a face-covering?

As required by IDPH, *“except while eating and during band, face coverings must be worn at all times in school buildings, even when social distance is maintained. All individuals in a school building must wear a face covering unless they have a medical contraindication, are under 2 years of age, have trouble breathing, or are unconscious, incapacitated, or unable to remove the face covering without assistance.”*

Since face coverings are required for students to participate in school, refusal will be addressed like any other behavior issue. School staff will make every effort to increase compliance; however, if your child will not tolerate a face covering, then remote learning might be a better option for them.

5. How will students who have medical accommodations be placed?

We anticipate a small number of notes from physicians regarding masks for students with high-risk medical needs. As a result, we will be working with individual families to determine the best environment for students to engage in learning, whether that be in-person or remote.

Cleaning and disinfecting

1. What are the increased cleaning and sanitizing steps being taken?

The custodial staff will be dedicated to cleaning high-touch surfaces such as door knobs, light switches and common areas, as well as scheduled bathroom cleaning, throughout the day and between the AM and PM sessions. Paper towel dispensers are being converted to touch-free dispensers. Water fountains will be restricted to water bottle filling only.

2. What will the ‘deep cleaning’ of spaces involve?

Every space in the building, including classrooms and bathrooms will be deep-cleaned every night. Each school will be using an electrostatic sprayer to disinfect all surfaces within a room in a short amount of time..

3. How will student work spaces be cleaned when they move to a new pod area?

YE Staff will disinfect any work space during scheduled breaks between pod transitions.

Daily Health Check

Parents must self-certify each child daily by answering the following questions: Has your child experienced any of the COVID-19 symptoms in the last 24 hours? Has your child been diagnosed with COVID-19 in the past 14 days? Has your child been in contact with anyone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19 in the past 14 days? Has your child traveled outside the state of Illinois in the past 14 days?

1. How will the self-certification process work?

The district is working to identify an easy-to-use, web-based questionnaire to facilitate this process. More information will be provided when the program has been selected.

2. What is the purpose of the travel question?

The travel question will provide nurses with background information should the need arise or if a student begins to experience symptoms. The Cook County Department of Public Health also issued quarantine guidance effective July 17 as follows: *Any person entering suburban Cook County living in a high-incidence state, or who visited the high-incidence state for more than 24 hours is recommended to self-quarantine for 14 days after arrival, or for the duration of their stay in suburban Cook County, whichever is shorter.* High incidence states status will be updated every Tuesday and currently includes Arizona, Florida, Louisiana, Alabama, Nevada, South Carolina, Georgia, Mississippi, Tennessee, Texas, Idaho, California, Arkansas, Utah, Oklahoma, Iowa and Kansas.

The district is weighing options for addressing this recommendation.

3. What if my child suffers allergies and has a runny nose or other minor symptoms that are included on the self-check list?

It would be important for parents to discuss chronic issues with their child's doctor and provide a doctor's note regarding recurring symptoms, such as allergies. If a student exhibits symptoms at school, the school nurses take a multi-faceted approach to review a child's condition, including information from parents, the teacher and medical history. More guidance on this issue is expected from public health officials and will be incorporated into the district's procedures.

COVID-19 Cases

1. What happens if a student or teacher tests positive?

If a person tests positive for COVID-19, much like someone who has whooping cough, all families with whom the child was in contact will be notified. Classrooms are being set up so that the likelihood of 'close contact' is low to non-existent, which will reduce the likelihood of mass quarantine. However, the Cook County Department of Public Health would provide guidance and recommendations, and could require the mass quarantining of classes or the closure of schools. The 'close contact' definition established by the department of health states *close contact occurs when anyone who has been closer than 6 feet for 15 minutes or more, with or without a facial covering.*

A student or teacher should not be in 'close contact' with anyone under that definition. The school nurses work closely with the Cook County Department of Public Health and will follow their guidelines on a case-by-case basis. Families of students within the same classroom(s) as an infected person will be notified, to the extent allowable by law.

2. What if someone in a student's or teacher's household tests positive for COVID-19?

In order to work collaboratively to ensure the safety of everyone in our community, we ask that you let us know if your child has had close contact with a family member or friend who is either exhibiting symptoms of or has been diagnosed with COVID-19. Examples include siblings, parents, grandparents, other relatives, babysitters, etc., whether they reside in your home or not. Close contact is defined as being within 6 feet of the individual with symptoms for more than 15 minutes. According to ISBE Part 3 Guidance, anyone who has had contact with someone who tested positive for COVID-19 or is suspected of having COVID-19 infection should isolate at home and monitor for symptoms for 14 days.

3. If a student is excluded from in-person learning, will they receive instructional support?

The student would receive school work from their teacher(s), much like any student who is out of school due to illness under normal circumstances. We are still developing how to best incorporate remote instructional support for students in this scenario.

Buses

1. Will students be physically distanced on the bus?

Physical distancing in buses will be to the greatest extent possible. While the state allows up to 50 students on a bus, we are working to have a maximum of one student per seat, unless they are siblings. For larger buses, the capacity will be 20 and for smaller buses, the maximum will be 10. Every student will have to have the self-certification form submitted before boarding the bus. Details of this process will be forthcoming. Young Explorers buses will have a staff member present to harness and unharness students. Parents will not be allowed on the bus.

2. If we registered for the bus but have changed our minds, can we get a refund?

Yes. Your account can be credited or a check will be issued if you paid by check. Please contact your school administrative assistant via email to request a refund.

In-Person School Day

1. What will the hours be?

Young Explorers will maintain existing hours. The AM classes meet 8:45 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and the PM classes meet 12:30 p.m. to 3:15 p.m. Students eligible for the Structured Language and Learning Program will attend from 8:45 a.m. to 3:15 p.m.

2. How will arrival and dismissal work?

Once we have received parent responses to understand how many students will be attending in-person, we will send out detailed arrival and dismissal procedures.

3. What are the key differences for the YE plan and the rationale?

A task force was formed to determine how to best provide a play-based experience while following safety protocols. In order to ensure play-based instruction, each classroom will be divided into instructional pods of no more than five students each for a minimum of two weeks. The classrooms have been laid out so that each pod is 6 feet or more apart. Each pod will engage in learning activities led by the classroom teacher, classroom assistant and/or related services specialist. All physical surfaces will be disinfected between rotations. Please see the Back-to-School Presentation sent on July 20 for more information about pods.

4. How will lunch be handled?

Only students who are eligible for the Structured Language and Learning Program will participate in lunch while at school. Students will be distanced more than 6 feet apart. YE staff will continue to support feeding with additional PPE in place.

Tuition

1. Is tuition the same for remote and in-person?

Tuition fees are waived for students enrolled in the At-Risk and Special Education categories. The tuition fee for Typically Developing in-person instruction is \$4,250 for the school year. Tuition for students enrolled in the Typically Developing category who elect the remote learning option will be \$3,187 (pending Board of Education approval) for the school year, representing a 25% reduction.

2. Tuition fees were waived in the Spring. Why is there now a tuition fee for remote learning?

Tuition fees were waived in the Spring in response to the rapid change in circumstances for the entire community. In planning for a more robust remote learning experience for our students, we have normal costs plus increased expenditures that account for the tuition cost, including the purchase of individual supply kits to align with learning activities and iPads for each student.

3. If we pay for the in-person tuition and the school switches to remote learning, will we be reimbursed?

In the event of a required school closure, tuition will be prorated to the remote learning rate.

Miscellaneous

1. Will we lose our spot in YE if we choose to unenroll?

If a family chooses to unenroll a student in Young Explorers, we can not hold the spot. Young Explorers is a rolling enrollment program, meaning new students can join YE upon turning

age 3 throughout the school year. If you choose to unenroll and then change your mind, please contact Jenna Duffy to determine next steps. Re-enrollment in the program will be considered if spots are available.

2. Will handwashing be closely monitored?

Yes. Early childhood-aged students have not yet developed independent hygiene habits. The YE staff has scheduled a minimum of four handwashing times during the day that will be supervised by an adult. Additional handwashing times may be necessary and will be supervised as well. YE staff will be trained on proper handwashing protocols and how to identify when this is necessary. Young Explorers classrooms are all staffed with a minimum of two adults and we plan to have at least one additional adult present in the classrooms the majority of the school day.

3. Will there be snack?

Yes. The District will purchase snacks that meet the dietary restrictions of our students instead of our usual routine of parents providing snacks for the classroom. We will not have a set snack time; however, if a student requests a snack or appears hungry, we will provide him/her with one. During this time, the student will be separated from other students and a plexiglass divider will be placed in front of them to minimize exposure while eating.

4. Will the students be using the playground equipment?

Not at this time. Students will still have Outdoor Classroom 30 minutes per day. We are consulting with our physical therapist and occupational therapist to provide physically distant outdoor activities that will promote gross motor development.

5. Will all YE students have an iPad provided to them or only students in remote learning?

The District has secured individual devices for each YE student. We are still developing instructional activities that align with our Health & Safety unit, being mindful of screen time recommendations from the American Academy of Pediatrics and Developmentally Appropriate Practices. Individual devices may be used in the classroom, if deemed instructionally relevant, to restrict the use of shared materials.