FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

When will the plan be finalized?
We plan to communicate a final plan for the reopening of our schools to our students, parents, staff, and community no later than Wednesday, August 12.

I’ve heard there is speculation that the WA DOH and/or the Governor’s Office may issue a “stay-at-home” order, resulting in the closure of all school districts for in-person instruction. Is this true?
It is true. Given the rapid rise in positive COVID 19 cases, there is speculation that the Governor’s Office may issue a “stay-at-home” order, resulting in the closure of schools for in-person instruction.

If this does happen, what would my options be?
If schools close for in-person instruction, students and parents would be able to select from options A, D and E.

Is it possible that our school district would close our schools for in-person instruction?
Yes, it is possible. As with any threat to the health and wellness of our students, staff, parents, and community, the BSD works closely with our state and local public health officials to make informed decisions about the safe operations of our schools.

What safety measures will be put in place to ensure the health and wellness of all students and staff when attending school?
The BSD is committed to working with the guidelines and mandates set forth by the CDC, WA DOH, local public health officials, OSPI, and the Governor’s Office.

What if I have more than one child enrolled in the BSD and we decide to participate in the hybrid model? Can they attend school on the same day?
The BSD will do everything possible to place siblings in the same cohort, ensuring they attend on the same day.

Will student attendance be required?
Yes.

Can I expect my student to receive daily instruction and regular, ongoing forms of feedback from their teacher?
Yes.

Will there be opportunities for students to access academic tutoring, mentorship, and/or other individualized support for my student’s learning and social-emotional health and wellness?
Yes. The district will be working on developing a network of academic and social-emotional support systems that students can access when not receiving in-person instruction.
What if my child qualifies for Special Education services, English Language services, and/or 504 accommodations?
The BSD staff will work closely with the parents of students who qualify for related services to successfully access the general education curriculum and/or goals outlined in the student’s individual learning plan.

Will there be grades?
Yes. Grading is required.

Will the BHS schedule provide my student with the same number of credits and elective courses as the previous schedule?
Yes. The high school is moving to a block schedule which will allow more time for each class, fewer classes to take each semester, yet allowing for more credits to be taken.

My family doesn’t have a digital device and/or Internet connection. Will there be assistance available?
Yes. First, families without necessary wifi connections will be allowed to attend school daily. Second, a limited number of hotspots will be available.

Who is online provider they will be using to facilitate 100% remote learning?
The district has chosen Accelerate Education as its ALE online program.

Will there be any supply fees, course fees, pay-to-play fees, or online enrollment fees when using an OSPI approved online provider affiliated with the BSD?
No.

Will there be meal services?
Yes. What this will look like is yet to be determined.

Screening
Do all students and staff members need to be screened for illness each day?
Yes. Both DOH and L&I require students and staff to receive a health screening before entering a school. DOH and L&I follow guidance from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), which allows for health screening to be performed at home before school or on-site. If health screenings are done at home, the process needs to include an attestation confirming the child or staff member does not have fever, shortness of breath, or cough. Whether screenings occur at home or on-site, school personnel should always be looking for visual signs of illness (flushed cheeks, rapid or difficulty breathing, fatigue, and cough) throughout the school day.

Are temperature checks a required element of screening?
Yes. Whatever screening methodologies are used by a school district, they must include a temperature check in either the attestation or the on-site screening.
Face Coverings
Are face coverings required to be worn at school by students and staff?
Yes. DOH requires everyone in a school building or on a school bus to wear a face covering, with specific exemptions identified in the guidance.

Can students use a face shield instead of a cloth face covering?
Yes, though cloth face coverings have a superior ability to capture more droplets from speaking, coughing, sneezing, etc.

Can staff use a face shield instead of a cloth face covering?
Yes, in certain circumstances. L&I has updated their guidance to allow staff to wear face shields when a face covering reduces the effectiveness of instruction (for example, during speech therapy, demonstrating enunciation, or language instruction). This is determined by the educator leading the instruction. For all other activities (staff meetings, hallway monitoring, playground or cafeteria monitoring, etc.), staff must wear a cloth face covering unless they fit into one of the exemption categories.

What is a cloth face covering?
According to DOH, a cloth face covering is fabric that covers the nose and mouth. It can be:
• A sewn mask secured with ties or straps around the head or behind the ears.
• Multiple layers of fabric tied around a person’s head.
• Made from a variety of materials, such as fleece, cotton, or linen.
• Factory-made or made from household items.

Physical Distancing in School Buildings
Is six feet of physical distancing required as part of a school reopening plan?
Yes. Districts must arrange their physical spaces to accommodate six feet of distance when all students and staff are seated.

With respect to physical distancing, DOH says, “as much as possible,” and L&I says, “to the maximum extent feasible.” Do these terms have different meanings for schools?
No. For the purposes of school facilities, districts must have a plan to maintain six feet of distance when all students and staff are seated. Both DOH and L&I recognize that some tasks and movements will require proximities closer than six feet, including passing in the hallway or a teacher’s moving around in the classroom.

When students are wearing face coverings, is six feet of distance still the expectation?
Yes. Face coverings combined with physical distancing increases health and safety, and both are DOH requirements.

Can we install plexiglass or other partitions in order to reduce the six-foot physical distancing requirement?
No. The six-foot planning framework is a mandate, regardless of other health mitigation strategies that a district may choose to add.

**Health Protections on School Buses**

**Are face coverings required on buses?**
Yes. Like classrooms and common spaces in school buildings, students, drivers, and aides must wear face coverings while on the bus.

**If students are wearing face coverings on buses, can the bus be at normal capacity?**
Yes. Unlike classroom time, which can be in excess of six hours a day in some schedules, bus rides are typically short in duration and are often essential for students to access their basic education. However, multiple additional health mitigation strategies such as health screening, face coverings, hand hygiene, frequent cleaning, and maximum air circulation are necessary when riders cannot follow the six-foot social distancing rule on buses.

**What about bus routes where some students are riding for longer durations?**
Buses can be occupied at normal capacity, but districts should have clear protocols for students to maximize physical distance on the bus for as long as possible until it is necessary to fill in the last of any available seats.

**Protecting High-risk Employees**

**What is the definition of a “high-risk” employee?**
The guidance is based on the CDC definition of “high risk.”

**Can a high-risk employee choose to come to work without additional accommodations?**
Yes. The employee does not have to identify as high-risk, and even if they do, they may choose to engage in regular employment without additional accommodations.

**Can a high-risk employee ask for additional protections?**
Yes. Districts must continue to follow existing law on reasonable accommodations. L&I has long-standing guidance regarding workers’ rights in work environments where they feel unsafe, and the employer’s role in addressing their concerns.

**Can a high-risk employee ask for an alternate work assignment if additional protections cannot be provided?**
Yes. This information is also included in L&I’s long-standing guidance on workers’ rights.

**If a high-risk employee cannot be provided additional protections and there are not alternative job assignments, can the employee access eligible forms of leave?**
Yes. Employers must provide high-risk individuals with their choice of access to available employer-granted accrued leave or unemployment benefits if an alternative work arrangement is not feasible.

**Are school districts required to provide an accommodation to employees if they are not high-risk themselves, but they live with someone who is?**
No. Rights for high-risk employees under Governor Inslee’s Proclamation 20-46, as well as workplace safety regulations provided by L&I, do not extend to family members of employees.

**Do schools have to close when there is a suspected or confirmed case of COVID?**
Not necessarily. Once a case has been confirmed, local health authorities will take over any contact tracing strategies. Districts should plan for and follow the elements outlined in the guidance (pages 20–21), including developing (in partnership with the local health authority) a response and communication plan specific to this situation. Response activities will depend on the number of cases, the extent of the exposure, and whether the virus appears to be spreading within the school. It is imperative districts work now with their local health authority to plan for the possibility of confirmed cases.

**If COVID cases emerge, who is responsible for making the final decision about whether a school must close due to a confirmed case?**
Both the local superintendent and the local health officer have the authority to close a school, with the local health officer holding ultimate authority to order a closure. The process will depend on the circumstances. It is imperative districts work now with their local health authority, including determining communication protocols, to plan for the possibility of confirmed cases and the need to close one or more schools.

**Are schools required to bring all students back to campus?**
No. The goal is to get our schools open for face-to-face, in-person instruction for as many students as we can safely. However, the requirements to protect health and safety, specifically the six-foot rule, will make it difficult for many districts to accommodate all students in the traditional school day at the same time.

**If districts cannot bring all students back to school each day, does OSPI have expectations for prioritizing services?**
Yes. Students furthest from educational justice and those who require in-person services to fulfill their basic education needs should be districts’ highest priority. Students with disabilities and those who did not or cannot have equitable access to learning with remote technologies should be prioritized for in-person services.

**In the 2020–21 school year, will districts be required to take attendance?**
Yes. Districts will be required to take attendance and maintain those attendance records regardless of the model of instructional delivery.

**Whether students are in continuous remote learning part- or full-time, will it count for the instructional days and hours requirements?**
The State Board of Education (SBE) is responsible for defining what constitutes an instructional hour for the purposes of compliance with 1,027 annual average instructional hours. The SBE is underway in defining this for 2020–21. OSPI has authority to waive days and hours, as was done in the 2019–20 school year, and OSPI is prepared to do so again if SBE or the Legislature does
not offer clarification on what constitutes an instructional hour in continuous remote learning models.

**Are schools closed?**

Depending on the number of positive COVID cases in an area, most schools are starting the year with remote learning. As positive cases decline, a student phase in model will be used to bring students back to school. When bringing students back to school all of OSPI, CDC, State and county health district requirements will be in place.

**How will meals be served during the extended closure?**

Brewster School District will be distributing breakfast and lunch from 9:30 a.m. to 11 a.m. every weekday. Any K-12 students, regardless of family income, can pick up a meal at the Middle School near the basketball court or at the Boys and Girls Club. Meals delivered by bus routes can be arranged by contacting 509-689-2581, 509-689-3440, or 509-689-3418.

**What about childcare?**

The Boys and Girls Club will be open from 7am-6pm Monday-Friday.

**What about student testing?**

Currently all state testing for the 2020-21 school year will go on as scheduled. This includes the Smarter Balanced Assessment (SBA), the Washington Comprehensive Assessment of Science (WCAS), the Washington Access to Instruction and Measurement (WA-AIM), and WIDA Alternate ACCESS for English learners, the English Language Proficiency Assessment for the 21st Century (ELPA21). This is subject to change based on additional closure announcements.

**Are visitors and parents allowed at school?**

Visitors and students may enter the buildings upon a pre-arranged meeting. Parents will continue to be allowed to visit schools and the district office for essential business only.