

Frequently Asked Questions

Wilshire Park Elementary
Quarter 4 - Shift in Learning Models
2020-21 school year

Q: Why can't students return to a full day of learning?

A: Our staffing remains a concern. In a school day prior to COVID-19, students were with their classroom teachers 5 hours a day. In our current model, students are going to get math, language arts, embedded science and social studies and specialists. Due to teacher contracts and a shift of a few specialists to the classroom (to allow more students to be in the building in a safe pod model), we have capacity for 5 hours. Additional specialist time will be required asynchronously.

Q: What happens if COVID-19 numbers get higher again?

A: We know how this virus is moving now and we are having better insights all these months later. Factors in "shutting down school" are not only case numbers & school transmissions, and many of those factors (medical resources, hospital beds) are not as big of an issue as vaccines are being rolled out. We are hyper-local with our numbers/tools, and we know exactly what point we weren't able to keep students & staff safe, and this number is much higher than anything that indicators and tools tell us we are at, so we feel we can open and maintain stability in our model. In the worst case scenario and numbers spike, we know that we would see that trend coming, and we would have time to plan a return to hybrid or distance-learning.

Q: What about plans for the fall (2021-22 school year)?

A: Our plan is to return to full days and in-person.

Q: What about the number of hours required by state law for students to be in school?

A: Schools have been given flexibility this year. With distance learning, hybrid, and in-person days, the specific hours are hard to measure.

Q: Will spring traditions be offered this spring?

A: Great question. I will get more information about these events and share them with families as soon as I can. This might be a great opportunity for parent volunteers.

Q: What are the quarantine guidelines for families that travel over spring break?

A: Students should quarantine after travel outside of Minnesota and take a molecular (PCR) COVID test on Day 5 or later in order to return after Day 7. (Day of return from travel is Day 0 and day of return to school is Day 8.) Results of COVID test should be shared with Lori Watzl-King: lwatzl-king@isd282.org. Students who are quarantined will be given make-up work for the week. Distance learning options will not be available.

Q: Do we have any data that WP students are actually on track academically?

A: Yes, we see growth in most of our students. The learning they are doing this year is different, yet we see evidence of students meeting the essential standards of their grade-level standards, as well as evidence of other meaningful types of learning.

Q: Why do teacher assignments need to change if choosing to switch to/from distance learning? Can't a pod be an entire class?

A: Our current system has more teachers teaching fewer students in a pod, so more teachers are required to be with students for a full day. This also requires more building space— we cannot just return to all in-person and have enough classrooms/teachers without combining pods (which means changing teachers).

Q: Will the district offer summer school to students to catch up academically?

A: An assumption is made that students will need to “catch up” academically. We have evidence students are learning traditional grade-level essential standards as well as other key skills. We are exploring options for summer learning opportunities. Independent of learning model type or impact of COVID-19, the district aims to meet every student where they are at in their learning and provide instruction to allow them to grow in their learning.