

# Differences in Options - Further Clarification

Aug 3, 2020

We understand it is difficult to make choices for your student(s) when specific details are not available. Though some small changes may be necessary as we progress, we offer the more detailed descriptions below in an attempt to further clarify the differences in each educational service option we are working to provide. We do want to make it clear that all student work will be required and graded, a significant difference from last spring. We encourage you to visit the links below if you have not done so already. Again we thank you for your patience as we prepare for a very unique and challenging 2020-2021 school year.

## **Important Links**

Options Description / Options Chart: <https://polkschools.org/choices/>

Wolverine Academy: [www.wolverineacademy.org](http://www.wolverineacademy.org)

Return Decision Survey: <https://forms.gle/Hm5DfaE3ngFYiety7>

## **In-Person Learning**

In-Person Instruction will place students in a live classroom setting at their assigned school. Students and staff will be required to wear face coverings, submit to daily temperature and symptom screening, and maintain social distance throughout the day. This option will be the most like our traditional learning environment.

There will be changes to aspects of the school day, like drop-off and pick-up procedures, breakfast and lunch in classroom settings, and no large gatherings of students. We will be integrating physical education, arts instruction, and recess time. Students will be given short socially-distanced breaks from face coverings during the day. We will take advantage of opportunities to get students outside, and to open doors and windows to keep fresh air circulating. High-touch surfaces will be cleaned throughout the day and thorough cleaning will take place each day after students

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leave. Details will differ slightly as they are specific to each school, and finalized versions of these plans will be completed and communicated.

*There is always a chance that a classroom, school, or the entire district may be shut down with little notice due to COVID19 exposure or outbreak. While we realize the challenges families face in dealing with an abrupt short or long-term closure, it is a reality we must face and communicate. Students affected by any closure would revert to a Remote Learning setting. It is important that families think about this potential for closing and have contingency plans ready.*

**Grades PK-5:** Our hope and current plan is that students in elementary school will be allowed to attend daily. This may change depending on the number of students selecting this option. If there are too many students to adequately socially distance we may be forced to move to a model in which older elementary students alternate attendance days during the week. We will not know this for sure until our family surveys have been completed. Students will be receiving instruction in their normal subject areas with integration of “specials” like art, music, and physical education.

**Grades 6-12:** Students in grades 6-12 will be divided into two groups and attend on an alternating schedule. We will divide the groups by last name making sure students in the same household will be on the same schedule. In order to reduce the number of days students have no live contact with their teacher and school environment, we will have **one group** attend on **Monday and Thursday** of each week, and the **second group** will attend on **Tuesday and Friday**. This means students will not have such a large number of days and time between live lessons and classes. Students will be enrolled in a “regular” schedule of courses. When students are not in school during the “off” days they will have assignments and projects to complete.

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Wednesday will be a day reserved for tutoring, individual student instruction, and delivery of services for at-risk students. We understand this model may be a challenge for some families but believe it is in the best interest of our students in terms of teaching and learning and their social and emotional health. We believe it will ultimately result in better outcomes for our students.

## **Remote Learning**

Remote Learning is learning from home with the support of our Polk Schools teachers. Remote lessons and teacher contact will be a combination of live Zoom meetings, recorded lessons, phone conversations, email and text, and paper packets for families with limited or no internet access. Again, students will be enrolled in their required courses just as they would in a traditional environment. Because so many of our students do not have internet access we will not be requiring “synchronous learning” where students must be logged on at a specific time each day. However, there will be a suggested schedule to follow and opportunities for students to “see” their teacher in live Zoom sessions or via recorded lessons.

Instructional pacing and delivery will be more closely tied to our live classrooms, meaning that lessons, assignments, and assessments should be similar. The same North Carolina standards being taught in our classrooms will be delivered to our Remote Learners. Teachers will make contact with students several times each week to check on their progress, and students and families can request additional support if they need it. Remote Learning also allows for an easier transition to In-Person Learning as students will be in a similar “place” in their lessons.

At the elementary level there will likely be several teachers who support our remote learners across the district, and other teachers who will be delivering instruction live in the classroom. Polk teachers worked all spring

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and into the summer to develop pacing and alignment that will be consistent across all schools and help with any necessary transitions. At the middle and high school level we anticipate some teachers being able to teach groups of remote students, and others, who because of very specific courses, may have to work with both live and remote students.

Learning management systems like Google Classroom and Canvas will be used to interact with students and to share assignments with teachers. For those using paper and pencil there will be a way to physically “turn in” assignments and get them graded. We are working to provide supplies and materials for students, including distribution of Chromebooks to families if they are needed.

## **Wolverine Academy**

Students enrolled in Wolverine Academy will be making a semester-long commitment to attend school from home. Students will be setting their own pace and learning through online curriculum and content provided by Edmentum ([video link](#)) facilitated by Polk County teachers. These teachers will not provide direct instruction but will be available to support student learning and monitor student progress. Students and families can also reach out to their Wolverine Academy teacher if they need extra help or support, or if they are having difficulty with the platform or materials.

In order to be successful as an independent learner in Wolverine Academy students will need strong reading comprehension skills and be able to manage their time effectively. Although internet access is not required, it is strongly recommended. To help ensure success and to help students stay on track, parents will need to identify a Learning Partner for their children. The Learning Partner will be necessary to help keep students engaged or to reach out to the Polk Schools teacher when more assistance is needed. They should also work to set up a structured environment for learning, a place and schedule to help the student as they work.

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Wolverine Academy will look different at different grade levels. Elementary students typically require more interaction and guidance, and the curriculum materials will not be the same as middle and high school. Some flexibility can be given in scheduling, but students will still need to enroll in and complete their required courses. We encourage you to visit [www.wolverineacademy.org](http://www.wolverineacademy.org) and read the FAQ section for more information.

## **Final Comments**

We realize making these decisions in such an uncertain time is very difficult. Again, more detailed plans about things like In-Person daily schedules, cleaning procedures, screening and monitoring, and dealing with potential exposures will be coming out soon. We appreciate your patience and understanding as we work to provide educational service options for our students and families. No matter what decision you make we will be ready to assist you, and to listen to your concerns and suggestions. Thank you.