



Explore! Community School: Response to Family Q&As

Friday, July 10, 2020

Dear Explore! Community,

Below, we share the school's response to the questions asked during the virtual re-opening meeting. Know that there will be consistent responses and opportunities to collect questions throughout this process. If there is something additional you would like to ask, you are encouraged to submit your questions through this Google form: <https://forms.gle/aSv3PAmVDU9DMc1Z8>.

- **Is an iPad a sufficient device?**
Yes! We intentionally chose all online platforms that will be compatible with Chromebooks, iPads, or other devices. In addition, a tablet might be more suitable for younger learners.
- **Will there be smaller virtual classes?**
Regular class sizes will be the same, but the way class is conducted will often be consolidated into smaller groups. For example, Morning Meeting and Read Aloud will remain whole group on Zoom just like it would during a regular school day. However, some aspects of our programming will be broken out into smaller groups on Zoom just like we have done traditionally at school.
- **Is there a schedule set every day or are in-person Zooms variable?**
The schedule will be set every day, but learning will not occur all in one block of time (for example 8:00 am-10:00 am). There may be 30 minutes of learning at this time; 40 minutes of learning at another time. There will also be time for asynchronous work and personal time. All synchronous learning time will be recorded in case you need to participate at a later time.
- **When will class hours and assignments be communicated?**
While we have preliminary schedule drafts, we are ensuring they are in alignment with state and district requirements. With that in mind, we plan to share drafts next week knowing there may be small tweaks.
- **Will there be a list of school supplies?**
Yes. As Explore! does typically we will provide a school supply list (adding disposable masks to this year's list). We will have a way to safely drop supplies off so we can continue to make kits as needed and provide students with supplies.
- **What about synchronous work time for fifth grade?**
5th grade will also have synchronous work time. Since 5th graders have 3 teachers, 5th grade students will have 3 hours of synchronous learning time.



- **What about requests for partnerships and pods?**

We will likely continue to operate with Explore!'s policy of not requesting classroom assignments. This policy remains in place at Explore! for equity purposes. This does not mean, however, we won't be responsive or collaborative as families approach this new learning environment. Our curriculum is intentionally planned so that students across classes are getting the same content material. With this in mind, it is possible to collaborate with other families, if desired, who have children in the same grade.
- **What about the Encore program?**

While we don't have access to this specific program like traditional public schools, we still offer enrichment via small group times, PBL, content literacy, etc. Both enrichment and intervention will be integrated into small group synchronous times and asynchronous times.
- **Will classrooms with one teacher be smaller?**

K and 1 will have 2 teachers in each class. Classrooms in 2nd grade and up will consist of a lead teacher and then an exceptional educator and interventionist who help across the grade level team. We needed to put more emphasis on intervention and have one adult as a clear point of contact for families. We also thought about this as a way to minimize contact when we're back in the physical space. We are intentionally designing smaller spaces and having intentional focus on small group instruction in the virtual classroom.
- **What about state testing?**

Since this is a state level decision we do not yet know whether state testing will occur this school year. Once we have received TDOE's decision we will share with families.
- **What will PBL look like now?**

Our essential question will be "How can symbols inspire and unite our community?" Students will be learning about what symbols are and what it means to inspire. Students will participate in an online sketch noting class where you hear something and draw an icon to symbolize your thought. We believe this is a useful skill to utilize in different types of classes. After symbols and symbolism, students will engage in a marketing portion: How do you market and create something? Students will work on creating various school materials (mascot, brochure, school flag, and core value logos). We are excited that in this virtual space families will be able to see firsthand what your student is learning about and can learn alongside.
- **When will we receive an updated staff contact list?**

We will provide an updated staff contact list the week before orientation. You will get information on your student's teacher(s) and how to get in contact. Teachers will host small zooms to help build relationships and community with teacher(s) and classmates.



- **What about supports for students with IEPs?**
We will continue to provide these supports. IEP, Intervention, and ELL services will be integrated into both the synchronous learning times (in the form of small group and co-teaching) as well as during the asynchronous times (might also look like small groups or 1:1 support). Related services (Speech, OT, PT) and IEP meetings will happen virtually as well.
- **Are you anticipating options for families should you go to an in person or hybrid structure? Would there be continuity for those wanting to stay home?**
When it has been determined safe to do so, we will return to the building and operate at the highest capacity that is safe (unsure what that number is right now). The plan moving forward will likely be driven by parent choice. A survey will be distributed to determine parent choice/preference.
- **Will one on one counselor appointments be available for students that need it?**
Yes, virtual counseling sessions will be available.
- **What if I have paperwork I need to drop off?**
The school building is closed for construction next week, but will be open next week. Please reach out to our registrar, Ms. Booker, at jbooker@explore.school for more information.

We appreciate your support and engagement throughout this process, and look forward to your partnership in the years to come.

With love,
Explore! Community School