

GMRSD REOPENING FAQ

Below are some answers to the questions many in the GMRSD community may have regarding our plan to reopen in September.

1) Who is on the Reopening Committee?

The Committee is composed of all district administration, GMREA representatives from Central and GMMS, Central nurse and guidance counselor, GMMS nurse and guidance counselor, the GMRSD Child Study Team, and two parent representatives. This format was prescribed by the NJDOE guidelines provided to all NJ schools in "The Road Back" guidance. We met five times throughout June and July to devise plans. All members had a say and a vote.

2) Why was one Plan issued on Monday, July 20 and a change made on Thursday, July 23?

The Plan issued on July 20 was based off of the data available to the Committee at that time. When it became clear that this data was not accurate, we held an emergency Committee meeting on July 23. It was determined, after a thorough review of the new data, that there was no way to safely distance students in any district classroom because of a smaller than expected (based on survey data) number of students selecting our Fully Remote option. In hindsight, when the Plan was released on July 20 it should have specified that it was dependent on all of those who answered the survey saying they would be fully remote to follow through. As of Friday, July 24, we were approximately 100 students shy of that number. With deadlines looming for approval and publication, we had to act on the official data on hand, which simply did not allow for safe distancing for students and staff.

3) Earlier information said that students who were "at-risk" would be afforded the opportunity to attend all four days. Is that part of this plan?

All students with IEPs will be able to attend all four days. This allows students to receive accommodations and services that are a part of their IEP. Other students considered "at-risk" will be provided with additional supports, but will follow the Hybrid A/B schedule.

4) Why is GMRSD operating on half-day instead of full-day schedules?

This point was discussed in great detail by the Reopening Committee. The decision was made for half days in order to give students the opportunity to meet with their teachers everyday. *Set schedules will be provided by every teacher for meeting on days when students are learning from home. These meetings will be small-group reading or math and will take place at the same time daily.* Had we utilized a full-day schedule, a student who attended Monday and Tuesday might have theoretically gone five days without any teacher contact. Another positive with this plan is that it provides custodial staff more time to sanitize the buildings everyday and prevents the risks associated with daily lunch periods.

5) What is Friday going to look like?

Fridays will be student-teacher virtual meetings on a half-day schedule (4 hours). The remainder of the day is time for classroom teachers to prepare two sets of lessons (in-person and remote)

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for the following week. Some Encore classes may be held during these times, as well. Make no mistake, learning WILL take place on Fridays.

6) Will my child be able to eat at school?

In short, yes. Teachers will provide times for snacks to be eaten in classrooms, as necessary. It is possible that cafeteria lunches may be available for purchase through the parent portal. These, too, would be brought to and eaten in the classroom. Further guidance on this is forthcoming.

7) I chose Fully Remote for my child. Who from GMRSD will assist?

Select staff will be responsible for daily support of the Fully Remote cohort of students. These teachers will remain with their students for the duration of the students' time in the Fully Remote program.

8) What is the protocol for face coverings?

Face coverings will be mandatory for all students on buses and in any common areas of the school building unless the child's health is adversely affected by wearing one. All staff are also mandated to wear face coverings at all times. The A/B Hybrid structure allows for safe distancing in classrooms, which means students should be able to remove face coverings while seated at their desks. "Mask breaks" will also take place throughout the day.

9) What is the protocol for health screenings?

Paraprofessionals and/or nurses will be present on buses to take temperatures as the children board. Should a child present with a fever of 100.4 or greater, he/she will be returned to their parent. In the event a parent/guardian is not at the bus stop, the child will be respectfully quarantined on the bus and on the school campus until an adult can pick them up. Students who are dropped off will be screened by trained staff at the main entrance to their school building. A certification will also be required to be completed via Real Time, indicating that the child has not displayed any symptoms of Covid-19 and is healthy enough to attend school. Staff will complete a similar certification and screening at the start of their work day.

10) What is the protocol for cleaning/sanitizing the building?

A manual is being created that will be posted to the district website in the coming weeks. It will contain information on cleaning schedules, cleaning products used, ventilation, and other pertinent items.

11) What about the effect on parents who work, child care concerns, and the lack of instructional time caused by this plan? And why was the deadline to register for the Fully Remote option set for after the BOE meeting?

There is no perfect plan. The Committee had two guiding principles: 1) Maintain the health and safety of staff and students and 2) Follow the data. Simply put, the data available to us did not allow for us to confidently maintain the health and safety of those in our buildings. We set the date of July 31 in order to provide reasonable time to register for the Fully Remote option,

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knowing we would have enough of the information we needed to finalize our plans for BOE approval July 28. Had we known the survey data and the enrollment would be so far apart, we would not have issued our original plan information on July 20. We will also continue to provide child care options on our website as they become available (there is currently a YMCA option posted).

12) If we start school in person and a few weeks into it feel uncomfortable staying in school, can we switch to remote learning?

Yes. Students in school can switch to fully remote at any time. However, once signed up for fully remote, students must remain in the remote cohort for a minimum of the remainder of the current marking period.

13) If we start the year remotely and a child is really struggling with this program, what are the options if any?

GMRSD teachers will support students daily via Google Meet, email, or by phone. The teacher assigned to the fully remote student will be with that student for the duration of their time in the program.

14) How many students do you plan per classroom?

If current trends continue, most classes will have between 8-12 students per day.

15) What affordances for the full-time and split-time remote working sessions are being made for Kindergarten students attending school for the first time? What is the expectation of at-home schooling time? What kind of curriculum/activities are planned for such young students?

Incoming kindergarten students will be monitored closely. Should kindergarten students opt for the Fully Remote program, they will learn through Edgenuity. GMRSD teachers will support, but at the start parents are likely to need to be close by to assist. For students who are part of the A/B hybrid program, the activities will be determined by the classroom teacher.

16) If rates of transmission stay low/lower more will we revisit adding more in-person class time? If so, is there a specific transmission rate/indicator that would allow for more in class schooling?

We will evaluate all the CDC and DOH data throughout the first six weeks of the school year. Should guidance allow, the possibility of increased school hours will be discussed.

17) Schools routinely have high temperatures in the warmer months due to lack of air conditioning, are the schools planning any type of relief from the high temperatures now that a mask is required to be worn?

With the A/B Hybrid plan, students will likely be seated far enough apart to safely remove masks during instruction. Outdoor instruction will also be available as often as necessary.

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18) The lack of knowledge about the Edgenuity program is making me resistant.

Where can I find or can you provide more information on the program? I have reviewed their website, but obviously, that is bias. I would like honest experience references or information.

GMRSD will have an information session about our Fully Remote program in August, similar to our Town Hall. Locating and inquiring of districts that have used the program is another good source of feedback.

19) For those parents who have children entering Pre-K , how can you justify the cost of tuition if the students will be 100% remote?

Edgenuity does not have a Pre-K program. Any preschool students choosing fully remote will work with GMRSD teachers. There are multiple tuition options available for full or partial days.