

# Back to School



August 12, 2020

Our weekly “Back to School E-newsletter” for families!



## *Upcoming Important Dates*

### **August 17, 18 & 19**

Anticipated dates for Chromebook pickup (including Westerville Virtual Academy students) and materials pickup at your school. Chromebooks are limited and intended to support those students who do not have appropriate access to technology at home to support their learning. Watch for details from your school.

### **Aug 20-21**

On August 20 and August 21, students will begin school remotely and receive important details about the upcoming school year. Among other things, they will learn what to expect during online learning and how to get support when needed. Schools will communicate with families directly about their particular activities on these days.

### **August 24**

All students who are NOT enrolled in the Westerville Virtual Academy will begin receiving their remote instruction according to the district's [Remote Learning Plan](#).

### **September 1**

Online classes begin for students who opted to enroll in the Westerville Virtual Academy.

## *Academics*

Now Showing on a Computer Screen Near You!



Your principals and school staff have been working hard to make the 2020-21 school year special, particularly under these most unusual and challenging circumstances. Please take a moment to watch the special greeting prepared especially for each school's students and families. Just [click your ticket on the Back-to-School page](#) to access the videos.



### **Professional Development Activities will Enhance Remote Instruction Experience for Students**

Knowing that remote instruction could be required at any point during the 2020-21 school year, teachers at all levels participated in various professional development activities over the summer to strengthen their skills and learn ways to better support their students in a virtual environment.

An example of one such course was "Surviving to Thriving in a Digital Learning Environment." In addition to completing online modules comprising the course, secondary teachers participated in virtual office hours offered by the Office of Curriculum & Instruction, as well as weekly "open discussion" times based on the current module. The modules offered were:

- Creating a Sense of Community (building relationships)
- The Modern Learner (EL, gifted, special education, and Culturally Responsive Teaching)
- Supporting Social and Emotional Health (overall well-being, specific strategies)
- Schoology 101 (Schoology assignments, discussions, tests/quizzes)
- Schoology 102 (Schoology updates, folders, and conferences)
- Prioritizing Standards (determining essential content and skills)
- Lesson Planning One (creating a structure for online learning)
- Lesson Planning Two (developing and adding content)
- Developing Strategies to Assess Student Learning (creating meaningful assessments)

All teachers were required to complete or show mastery of Schoology 101 and Schoology 102. Some of these courses are also being offered virtually in live, 90-minute sessions this first week that teachers are back at school. The modules will also be available to teachers online for continued use and reference. Teachers will have time to collaborate in live sessions with their peers to develop strategies, lessons, and share ideas on how to make this start to school a success.

Additional professional development opportunities are being offered virtually in live sessions during this first week back for teachers, including a wealth of courses to support special education students, as well as other sessions such as:

- How to Help Parents and Students to Navigate Schoology;
- Conferences, Assignments, and Gradebooks: Using Schoology for Distance Learning;
- Apex to Supplement Remote Learning; and
- Distance Learning with Desmos.

Other required sessions for secondary teachers include iReady for all middle school English language arts and mathematics teachers, and high school English Learner teachers. Teachers of Westerville Virtual Academy students will also complete Apex training. More than 60 teachers completed Choice Boards professional development. Choice Boards allows more voice and choice for students, as well as increased creativity and personalized learning. Teachers learned how to adapt these various features and functions to remote learning environments.

Elementary teachers also participated in a Professional Learning Series over the summer, which was aligned to three areas:

- District Learning Management System/Platform (Schoology),
- Remote Learning (Utilizing various resources and tools for remote learning.), and
- Digital Products (Vendor provided PD).

In addition to required training sessions on the district's new iReady digital platform, teachers shared best practices, asked questions, and learned together in various grade level collaborations. Virtual pop-in office hours were also available with the Office of Curriculum & Instruction for teachers of any grade level to ask questions or get feedback, with additional resources available electronically.

In addition to a robust slate of professional development sessions held on teachers' first day back, additional professional development opportunities are set for elementary teachers in:

- Grade Level/Department Reading Instruction Guidelines,
- Grade Level/Department Technology Resources and Tools,
- Specialists Team Collaborations, and
- Curriculum Specialists Open Office Hours.



## Operations



### Don't Forget: Sign Up for Meals!

If you want your student to receive a school breakfast and/or lunch during virtual learning this year, families **MUST** complete an [opt-in form](#). In addition, families who wish to apply for free or reduced-price meals must complete the [application for meal benefits](#). These links and other important information are also available at [www.wcsoh.org/meals](http://www.wcsoh.org/meals).

Pickup sites will be open from 8 a.m. to 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. on Fridays. Families that may have difficulty making one of these times should inform the Food Service staff at 614-797-5993 to discuss alternate arrangements.

Families that sign up to receive breakfasts and/or lunches during remote learning will be assigned to one of the following sites designated as a location for meal pick-up:

- Annehurst ES, 925 W. Main St.
- Hawthorne ES, 5001 Far-View Dr.
- Huber Ridge ES, 5757 Buenos Aires Blvd.
- Walnut Springs MS, 888 E. Walnut St.
- Westerville Central HS, 7118 Mount Royal Ave.
- Westerville North HS, 950 County Line Rd.
- Westerville South HS, 303 S. Otterbein Ave.
- Wilder ES, 6375 Goldfinch Dr.

---

## Other



### Board Meeting Highlights

This past Monday's Board of Education meeting included several important presentations and discussions. Anyone interested may view these portions of the meeting through the Board meeting video on our YouTube Channel:

- [Public Comments](#): Addressing recent common questions about the start to the year
- [The fiscal impact of COVID-19](#): How the pandemic has affected district finances
- [Equity Presentation](#): Towards a More Equitable and Just School System



### Athletics

If you missed last week's update on fall athletics, the document is available by [clicking here](#).



### Passing the Torch

Next Wednesday will be the last edition of our family Back to School newsletter as your teachers and schools continue to provide you with communications specific to the 2020-21 school year. The district will continue to communicate with families through direct email messages and other means.