

Waynesville Middle School Parent Q&A Responses

Our community spoke, and we listened. 82 percent of our parent survey respondents believe we need to focus our energies on making it safe for students and staff to return to the school building; we are working diligently to make in-person learning a reality. In order to maintain a healthy environment, the district will follow the mandates and requirements set forth by the federal government, Center for Disease Control, Ohio Governor, Warren County Health Department and other entities as it relates to protecting the health of students and staff members.

We have had to become creative with space in the building to maintain a socially distant and safe as possible environment for students and staff. Health and safety are our top priority with reopening school this academic year. Many necessary changes have been made to make in-person learning a possibility and this has led to many questions from parents and students.

During a “normal” school year, typically we can fit 28-30 students in a classroom. With the social distancing measures in place, we can’t accommodate those numbers in that same classroom. Most classrooms at the middle school now have capacity for around 18 students, depending on the room size. Some classrooms are larger than others and can have more students in them. With that in mind, we have been working throughout the summer to create a schedule that would accommodate student offerings and reduced classroom seats available. We ask for your flexibility and support throughout this school year as we are supporting our community’s desire for a five day in-person learning for our students.

We have compiled the top questions from parents in order to help support you and your student during this unprecedented school opening process.

Thank you for your partnership,
Karyn Phillips
Principal

What is flipped instruction, or a flipped classroom?

A flipped classroom is a reversed teaching model that delivers instruction at home through interactive, teacher-created videos and moves “homework” to the classroom. Moving lectures outside of the classroom allows teachers to spend more 1:1 time with each student. Students have the opportunity to ask questions and work through problems with the guidance of their teachers and the support of their peers – creating a collaborative learning environment.

Benefits of the Flipped Classroom:

- Students can move through the materials at their own pace. They can revisit materials they have not mastered.
- Students learn through activity in the classroom instead of listening to a largely passive lecture.
- This frees up the lecturer’s time for more 1:1 time with students who need the most help. Peer tutoring facilitated.

- Can be implemented so that the instructor has a good idea who is prepared for class, along with which students are struggling and what concepts or tools they are struggling with.
- Students who have mastered the material can be paired up with students who are struggling. Difficult materials can be reviewed.

Why are you using flipped instruction?

Students may be absent more than normal this year. Using the flipped instruction model as a district, students will still have access to their teacher's lessons because they will all be recorded. This prevents a loss of learning and instruction for our students. In the event we were ever moved into a period of remote learning, the students will have a smooth transition because they will already have established course, routines, and access to the instruction without missing a beat. Finally, due to the 3 feet spacing between students, we have much less space in the classroom. Students in a large classroom may be split into two groups and have their lesson streamed to them from another room by their teacher. They are not losing out on any instruction, as they are watching it live and the staff will rotate to support.

Why does my child have a study hall?

This year, all students have a study hall, but it isn't a study hall in the traditional sense. We are using a flipped instruction model this year. During their study hall, they will be required to watch videos of their teachers teaching a particular concept or lesson. Then when they meet in person for that class, students will be able to jump right into an extension activity, work through problems and concepts, conduct experiments, and other activities with their teacher. This will actually increase the amount of time learning each new idea or concept and the students will be able to watch the videos as much as they like until they fully grasp the concepts. Of course, the teachers will still be available during class time to explain anything the student does not understand. Study hall will be needed as students will have lessons to watch outside of the classroom for many classes. Study hall is essential time provided for students to use during the school day for supporting flipped instruction.

Why did my 8th grade student not get into the high school classes they chose?

Unfortunately, high school courses are exactly what they claim to be - high school courses. This means that because of the limited number of students allowed in each classroom due to social distancing guidelines, the high school students filled most if not all of the seats offered. We have shared Spanish and French teachers with the high school. They will need to serve the high school population first as those courses are for earning credit toward their high school diploma and Honors diploma for some. 8th grade students will have plenty of time when they are in high school to take these classes, and having to wait an extra year is unfortunate, but will not hinder their high school pathways.

Why did my student not get into the electives that they wanted?

Social distancing guidelines mean that we cannot allow the same number of students in each class as before. Thus, your student may not have been able to fit into the class that they chose. Every attempt was made to meet the requests made by the student, but unfortunately, the space is simply not available this year. Your student was placed into another elective that did have room. This may be a class that your student does not think they will like. This is an excellent opportunity to broaden their interest area. Maybe it will turn out to be their favorite class! It is not fair that our students are not able to take the classes they would prefer to take, but we must remain flexible during this unprecedented time.

My 7th grade child did not choose careers and was told that they would not have to take PE this year. However, both are in their schedule. Can we change these classes?

Careers and PE are now mandatory classes for every 7th grade student. Careers is an important stepping stone for building a portfolio which can be used towards a graduation pathway beginning their freshmen year. Mr. Hill is excited to be in the middle school with us and teaching this course.

Why does my student only have one period of English and not two?

Due to social distancing, we were unable to get every student into a double block of English class each day safely. The numbers were just too large. Moving away from the double English block to one period of English allowed more flexibility in all subject area classes to have smaller class sizes.

The students will gain more instructional time with this subject during study hall - see note on the question concerning study hall.

Can my child change their electives?

Unfortunately, electives as a general rule cannot be changed. There is nothing else available as all electives are full. If some of our in-person students decide to move to the VLA platform, we will have a waiting list for each class. We could then move a student from the waiting list into the course.

If my child is opting for online (VLA) classes, do they have to attend the orientation day for their grade?

No, your student should not attend the orientation day. However, we will plan on another orientation around the end of the first semester for those students who plan to start coming to school after Christmas so they can also feel more at ease coming back to the classroom. We will continue to send out school newsletters and information to our VLA students and families because they are still a part of our student body, just not physically attending with us in-person.

When is the first day of school?

The orientation for 6th grade is all day on August 31st. The orientation for 7th and 8th grades is September 1st. This will be treated as a regular school day and students are expected to attend. **However, the first day of school is September 8th.** If you are unable to make the orientation day, you will need to call the school just as you would on a normal school day to let us know your child will not be there.

If we have opted for VLA classes, can we return to the classroom after the first quarter (9 weeks)?

No. If you have opted for the online classes, you are required to remain online until the end of the semester, which is December 22nd. Your child will be permitted to return to the classroom after the winter break if he/she desires. Otherwise, you can continue with the VLA classes until the end of this school year.

When will my VLA (online) student get to have their school picture taken?

We are working with Lifetouch to provide an evening session for those students not in the classroom. We will pass on a date and time as soon as it is available.