

Dear Parents and Community,

The start of school is right around the corner, and I am ready to release our back to school plan (click [HERE](#) to read the plan) to deal with the ever-changing COVID-19 concerns. The Board of Education is expected to approve this plan at their August meeting (Thursday, August 6<sup>th</sup> at 6 PM in the middle school media center)

The staff fully believes that the best place for students is inside the school building, learning with teachers and their peers. We believe that the best way to accomplish this goal is to have all staff and students wear facial coverings (masks/shields) during the day. We understand the controversy dealing with this subject, but with a statewide mandate and the newest research showing masks do make a difference, we have no choice but to go this way to keep our staff and students safer. We understand that the younger students will have issues, and our staff will work with students on this. The best thing right now is for families to start practicing mask wearing. This will help the students build up their tolerance.

We understand that going back to school during the COVID-19 era has its challenges for parents. Therefore, we are offering two options for schooling in the fall.

1. A green, yellow, red system: Green is going 5 days a week with all kids. You will see in the plan we try to enhance our social distancing and also enhance our cleaning schedule. Yellow is where we alternate and half the students attend two days per week and the other half are online, then it switches for the next two days. The last level is when we are under red, it will be totally online, with Elmwood teachers providing the lessons, similar to how the school year ended last year. We will move between these levels as dictated by the Wood County Health Department, the Governor, and the number of cases in our area. I will try my best to give the greatest amount of notice for a level change.
2. The other option is called the Royal Academy and is a total online program where your kids stay at home and work through the program at their own pace. All teachers in this model are provided by the company, and we have one staff member in house to be the coordinator and local help for when kids need support. (Click [HERE](#) for a pamphlet) If a parent chooses this option, they are committing to this program for the full semester. Parents can change to option 1 above at the semester break.

Finally, we are looking at pushing back our start date by one week to give the teachers time to prepare for this “new normal”. We will not have First night this year, as we cannot have large crowds on campus. More information to come, but you can pay for your child’s fee online or at any office. With the calendar change, the new start date would be Wednesday, August 26<sup>th</sup>. (Click [HERE](#) to see a copy of our calendar) Please note this one shows the original start date, and the only change is moving that to the 26<sup>th</sup>.

Please read the plan so that you know what to expect and help you make a decision for your child. If you are going to the Royal Academy, or other non-Elmwood options, please let us know so that we can plan accordingly. Please let us know about transportation plans also. Please let Central Office know your plans on Royal Academy and transportation by Monday, August 6<sup>th</sup> so that we can finalize our plans. No plan is perfect, and everything about COVID is controversial. Please realize we did our best to accommodate all viewpoints and this is the plan that is best for Elmwood right now. We may have differences of opinions, but we need to stay as an Elmwood Community and support each other’s beliefs.

Thank you,

Tony Borton

Superintendent, Elmwood Local Schools