



Phalen Leadership Academies

Parent Update

August 3, 2020

Dear Families,

We hope this letter finds your family healthy and well this summer. Please know we have been focused on the re-opening of schools for several months by engaging with the staff, community, and guidance from the Ohio Department of Education to provide feedback on options for reopening. This situation remains fluid and we have prepared for all scenarios. **We believe that the most responsible and safest manner for both our scholars and staff is to begin the first nine weeks in a 100% virtual environment.**

As we maneuver the changing landscape of our society, we remain committed to the education of our community's scholars. In making decisions about the reopening of schools, not only are we considering your child's health and wellness, but the health and wellness of our fabulous staff. This decision was made based on the guidance from several agencies including the local Health Department, Centers for Disease Control (CDC), and Executive Orders from Governor DeWine. Guidance and requirements change frequently. Please know we are continuing to be as flexible and understanding to changes while adjusting to the plans set forth. Our plans will be monitored and evaluated each 9 weeks to determine the best course of action to keep our scholars and staff safe.

Instructional Opportunities

Our school values the choices families make for their scholars. Regardless of the model of instruction we utilize, we commit to providing your child with a high-quality education by a certified educator. Your children will continue to be the most important core value that guides all of our decisions.

- **1:1 Devices:** We are excited to provide your scholars with electronic devices that can be used at home to access daily lessons. Due to the high demand of electronic devices from all across the country, devices are being delivered in phases. Therefore, please be sure to provide your child's school with the information needed as they reach out in order to determine device needs.
- **Electronic Device:** Scholars that currently have access to electronic devices will be able to engage in lessons with teachers via Blackboard. Scholars that do not currently have an electronic device will start the year engaging with paper/pencil packets that teachers will work with them via weekly phone conferences to complete. Enough electronic devices have been ordered for ALL scholars to receive their own personal device.
- **Device Distribution:** A staff member will be contacting you to schedule device pick-up. Please be sure we have the most updated contact information to ensure we can reach you for future scheduling. Please be sure to provide the most updated information.
- **Device Cost:** There will be a \$20 accidental coverage fee for families. Families with more than two scholars will not pay more than \$40. Additional information regarding payment is forthcoming.
- **Blackboard Collaborate:** Teachers will utilize this web-based platform to teach live-virtual lessons for both whole/small group instruction.
 - This can be accessed using a computer, mobile app, audio, and a tablet
 - Does NOT require software installation
 - Opens in a web browser
 - Staff are receiving implementation training to help scholars engage with the content and each other



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- **Help Desk:** A Technology Help Desk will be available to provide scholars with families and support technology issues and questions. It can be accessed by clicking this link. Technology Help Desk. Our eLearning Help Center will be open Monday-Friday 8am-8pm est. A Call Center will also be available in the coming days.
- **Family Support:** Virtual trainings and small group in person family support meetings will be offered to provide families with guidance on using the Blackboard platform.
- **Meal Availability:** We realize that some of our families rely on the daily meals provided by the school. Meal providers will ensure breakfast and lunches are made available for families to pick-up throughout the week. Specific pick-up day/times are being finalized and will be shared in future communication.

For the fall school year, we will be providing **schedules for instruction, taking attendance, and engaging you and your children in learning.** We will publish family and staff expectations in virtual learning ahead of the first day of school. Teachers will continue to engage in professional development in virtual instruction.

It is imperative that we all understand that as the plans for state change, our school opening plans will change.

Diagnostic Testing: KRA and NWEA testing will still be administered. Families will be provided with the option to bring their scholars into the school in small groups for them to complete testing. Mandatory masks, temperature checks, six-feet social distancing, and all CDC guidelines will be followed. However, virtual testing will also be made available, but families will be asked to ensure scholars have a quiet testing environment. Additional information on testing is forthcoming.

Special Education Students: Scholars with special needs will receive instruction aligned with IEP goals through their assigned case manager. The case manager will assist in determining the best accommodations and modifications for course work based on your student's IEP. Special education and related services as identified in the IEP during eLearning may be provided in a variety of ways including the use of telephone calls, instructional support materials, internet based or virtual lessons and/or virtual therapies, and other available distance-based learning approaches.

Social & Emotional Health/Well-being: We understand that our scholars, staff and families have encountered additional stress and anxiety over these past few months. Scholars will have access to contracted community providers who will deliver evidence-based mental health services including mental health assessments and interventions, transition/recovery supports, and telehealth services. Families may also contact the school to inquire about other possible agencies that may be available to assist scholars with mental health concerns.

We realize reopening schools during COVID-19 is critical to reopening the community and even the state. This is not an obligation our school takes lightly. However, our first commitment will ALWAYS be to the scholar and families we serve. **Our priority must be keeping them safe.** We hope that you are in agreement and can understand this decision. Please continue to reach out with questions and remember that we are all in this together.

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Ohio Regional Director

