

# Carpe Diem – Seize the Day Blog from

the Desk of Dr. Steve Hutton

*Editor's Note: Content presented in the Carpe Diem – Seize the Day Blog is for awareness and informational purposes only, and it is not meant to be a diagnostic tool.*

Have you wondered how schools will re-open for the 2020-2021 school year? As a former teacher and school administrator, that thought has crossed my mind many times since schools were closed in March. For those with epilepsy, it is important to begin to understand as soon as possible how schools will operate next year. This has caused a lot of stress and anxiety for adults as well as children with epilepsy. My goal in this edition of Carpe Diem – Seize the Day Blog is to reduce some of that stress and anxiety as they can be seizure triggers for your child. To answer the question about how schools might operate in the fall I did some research.

To find the answer to my question, I searched the websites of the departments of education for Ohio, Kentucky, Indiana, and Tennessee along with the corresponding websites of each state's school boards association. As of this date, only the Kentucky Department of Education has readily accessible detailed information about how schools might operate next year. Options have been given to each Kentucky school, and each local board of education will make the decision as to how their schools will re-open. Additionally, I found information about how schools might re-open from a Wright's Law webinar. Recently, the Superintendent of the Cincinnati Public Schools has recently released several recommendations to the Board of Education as to how the CPS schools might re-open for the 2020-2021 school year. At this time, I do not believe that CPS has made a final decision about re-opening school for next year.

I have listed below five **hypothetical** structures or options for how schools might operate next school year. These **hypothetical** options include:

- **Option 1** – Schools could fully open for business. School will revert to how teaching and learning were provided prior to the COVID-19 school closures.
- **Option 2** – Teaching and learning might take place remotely as it did from March until the end of the school year.
- **Option 3** – A hybrid model could be used. There might be a combination of how teaching and learning will take place. Some teaching and learning will take place in school and some will be conducted remotely.
- **Option 4 - Scheduled Rotations** - Under a scheduled rotation model, the school could assign students to groups that would attend school on alternating patterns, such as A-B days, AM/PM patterns or alternating weeks. Under this model, fewer students would be in the building during the day, allowing for greater social distancing. The reduction in students also could be used to reduce class sizes, allowing for furniture to be removed from classrooms to promote necessary space and reduce unnecessary surfaces. When students are not in school, they may be participating in project-based learning opportunities, asynchronous instruction, or other assignment-completion tasks.
- **Option 5 - Synchronous Opt-In** - Under a synchronous opt-in model, parents could choose whether their children attend school in person or virtually. Instruction would be

delivered synchronously to students who are at school and at home through virtual live streaming. This option requires heavy use of instructional technology, including digital tools that already are available in most classrooms (mobile devices, web cameras, digital meeting platforms and learning management systems). This model leverages the strengths of teachers and staff and may require greater flexibility for co-teaching, co-facilitating and coaching opportunities to drive learning successes.

If you have a child with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), I suggest that you begin thinking about getting an IEP for your child immediately that matches one of the options listed above for how schools might operate in 2020. If you have a new IEP in place at this time, I suggest that as soon as a decision has been made about how schools will operate, you should immediately call the school and schedule an IEP meeting. ***Just remember, parents have the right to call for an IEP meeting at any time. This meeting can either be in person or by video.*** At this meeting, a new IEP should be developed to match one of the options for how the school will be operating in the 2020-2021. The IEP that was developed at the end of the 2019-2020 school year was developed with the idea that students would be returning to the classroom in the fall. **I strongly encourage parents to develop a new IEP that matches how the school will be operating next fall** (see options 1-5). If you need help developing a new IEP, I would be happy to be of assistance.

(Editor's Note) ***Governor DeWine in his press conference on 6/2/2020 made a major announcement about schools. It is his intention that schools will fully open with students returning to the classroom in the fall. However, as we have learned, plans can change very quickly, and plans will change if there is a second spike of COVID-19 cases. Each local board of education will determine the date and how schools will re-open. The Governor will provide districts with broad guidelines regarding the how student health will be protected. The next Carpe Diem – Seize the Day Blog will outline questions that parents should ask the administrator of their child's school regarding health and safety precautions for the 2020-2021 school year.***

***Editor's Note: The Carpe Diem – Seize the Day Blog will be distributed weekly beginning on June 29<sup>th</sup>.***

Always remember – **CARPE DIEM – SEIZE THE DAY!**