Northeastern Bobcat Cyber Academy
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

The Northeastern York School District is offering an entirely digital program, K-12, for any interested students. As part of that program, students will have access to all of the services that are typically found at school, such as counselors, gifted and learning support, related arts, and social-emotional instruction. Daily lessons, aligned to the PA Core Standards, will include both synchronous and asynchronous work, with students participating in live digital sessions with their teachers each day.

The Bobcat Cyber Academy is much like a typical school experience, with a combination of live instruction and assignments that are comparable to a full day of school. It's also aligned with the PA Core Standards, and will mirror the experience students have inside our school buildings. Some of the most significant benefits of our BCA over other cyber programs include still being a Bobcat, and all that comes with that. Our BCA students are still enrolled in NESD, which means they can participate in all of our social events, field trips (when we can have them again), instrument lessons, clubs, and other school organizations. Students who choose cyber for a period of time and then want to return to our schools when the pandemic has resolved, will be able to transition seamlessly back into our schools since the BCA and our school buildings will be teaching the same curriculum and standards, and have mirrored programs for students and families.

1. What learning platform will you be using for the cyber school and live teaching sessions? Google for K-8 and Schoology for 9-12. Google Meets is used for the live instruction. When we use Google Meet with students WITHIN the district, there are security measures that keep unwelcome guests from accessing the Meets:
- Integration with Google Classroom gives the teacher more control to hold, start and end meetings. Meetings cannot start without the teacher present and students can not rejoin once the teacher leaves the meet.
- Teachers can start Meets using a nickname - again, students can not start a meet and can not join this meet until the teacher is present. Nickname Meet codes expire within minutes after the meeting ends.
- Students must enter a meet as themselves. Teachers do not admit any person that should not be in the Meet. Only when a student is logged in as themself, they are able to access the meet.

2. Will teachers be teaching their specialty for the cyber live lessons? (i.e. math certified teachers teaching math, etc.)? Teachers will be teaching within their certifications. At the secondary schools, that's entirely their content area. At K-6, they're all certificated to teach all core subjects, so they'll be doing that. Obviously, art, music, physical education, etc. will be taught by the specialists.

3. Will there be live lessons taught each day? There will be live instruction each day, but whether or not a student will access it live or view a video will be flexible to the needs of the student and family.

4. What types of independent work will be required (will this be work created by the teacher or relying on websites, like Study Island, for practice of concepts and quizzing of material?) Independent work will be a blend of created resources, recorded videos, and subscription websites.

5. Will students have the opportunity to work on partner or group projects virtually? Collaborating is an essential part of learning! Yes, that will be in the lesson plans.

6. Are there any plans to help students who use the cyber school to stay connected socially to other students? So long as we are permitted to host events on campus, our Bobcat Cyber Academy students will be included in those, such as assemblies, field trips, clubs, and performing arts.

7. How will they do science labs virtually? Our science teachers are experienced using virtual labs and have several options to implement depending on the content and requirements.

8. Will teachers be available during the school day to quickly respond to student questions? Yes. At the K-6 level, core content teachers will teach ONLY in the BCA. At grades 7-12, teachers will have designated times to respond, since they'll also be teaching in person classes.

9. If starting online, will students be able to move back to the in school model if local caseloads decrease throughout the year? What will the process be for those or who to contact? Yes, changes should be directed to Ms. Linda Miller. She can be reached at millerl@nebobcats.org or by calling 717.266.3667 ext. 10228.

10. Will orchestra and band teachers be offering virtual small group lessons to district cyber students? Yes

11. Are cyber students able to participate in after school sports if those continue? Yes. Bobcat Cyber Academy students are enrolled in NESD, so they are able to access all programs that our students in the brick and mortar schools are eligible for.

12. Will cyber students need to complete lessons for gym/art/music as they did in the spring or will the focus be on core subjects? It's a comprehensive program, so all subjects are included.

13. Will parents have access to lesson/grading expectations so that we can help keep our student up to date on required work? Yes, in fact, parents will be provided with a weekly overview each week.

14. Will the curriculum be able to fulfill the PA grade level standards in each subject so that students aren't having gaps in their learning that will hinder their progress in future grades? Yes. We are identifying essential questions and focusing our instructional time and resources on the most important skills and concepts so that all students, in our schools or in our BCA, will have the skills they need to have successfully mastered the PA Core Standards.

15. If a cyber teacher gets sick and is unable to teach live lessons, will there be other teachers at that same grade level/subject area to fill in? If a Bobcat Cyber Academy teacher is unable to teach their lessons for a day, there will be a certificated teacher to cover their classes.

16. How do I enroll my student(s)? It's very simple. A parent questionnaire will come out this week. On that, you can indicate that you want to enroll in the Bobcat Cyber Academy, then we'll contact you to make the arrangements.

17. My student has an IEP/GIEP. Can they enroll in the BCA? Yes. Students with IEPs and GIEPs will still have their assigned case managers. Mrs. Radanovic will still oversee the special education services for all of our students with IEPs, including those in our BCA, keeping in mind that virtual instruction is not ideal for students with some specific disabilities. This will include paraprofessional support and LS teacher support in the BCA. Students in the Bobcat Cyber Academy will have access to live instruction each day. In addition, secondary students will have access to office hours for their teachers, so they can receive additional support, if needed.

18. What will a typical day look like? It will look very much like school did in February of this year, only online. Students will have the equivalent of a full school day in a combination of live digital lessons, recorded videos/resources, and independent work. The live lessons obviously have a time constraint, but students would have discretion to complete the independent work during other times of the day if they prefer.

19. Which teachers will be assigned to the Bobcat Cyber Academy? The assignment of teachers will be completed following the results of the parent questionnaire that goes out this week. Then we'll know how many teachers/sections we need for each grade and content area. Once those are selected, they'll be shared. Mr. Clifton is the K-6 principal and Mr. Iezzi is the 7-12 principal. Dr. Payne will be available to assist with all parts of the program, as well.

20. Will there be an orientation/training for students and parents with the program for the cyber academy prior to the first day of school so we can become familiar with how to use it? Yes. In the event we cannot hold live orientation, we are preparing a video orientation for families so that both parents and students will understand the platform and how to access daily instruction.

21. Will parents have the access to contacting a teacher via telephone for direct questions if there is a problem? The computer will be the primary means of communication, so scheduling a Google meet will be the best way to meet with the teacher.

22. Will attendance be taken through the academy or do parents need to collect that? Bobcat Cyber Academy teachers will take attendance.

23. For example if our kids get sick with the flu and are truly too sick to do schooling on a particular day because they need to get rest....how does that work? If students are too sick to access their program on a specific day, they would be called out sick, just like a typical school day. They would then have access to the lessons from the missed day and could meet with their teacher online for help catching up.

24. Will students still be using their chrome books for the cyber academy? Yes. And they'll have access to our technology support for them.

25. Can we use our home computer for the cyber academy? If you have another device that you prefer, that's okay!

26. How will specials be done? The Bobcat Cyber Academy is a comprehensive program, so students will have related arts classes in the BCA.

27. Will all assignments be digital or will some require printing and sending back? All of the work in the BCA will be done electronically, so there will be no need to mail or drop off assignments.

28. How will state testing work? If PSSAs and Keystone Exams are offered this year, students in the Bobcat Cyber Academy can come to school to take the assessments.

29. How will IEP meetings be held? If schools are able to be open, IEP meetings can be held in person or virtually, depending on the preferences of the family.

30. If there are any activities held at the physical school building they are designated to go to, Will the cyber students be included? Ex: Winter concerts, assemblies, etc. Yes, only students in our Bobcat Cyber Academy will be eligible to participate in these special events.

31. What professional development is being provided to teachers? Our technology integrator, Mrs. Shannon Oliver, has provided staff development to all teachers. Mrs. Oliver will continue to support teachers as the BCA opens. In addition, we have provided access to extensive professional development through the Intermediate Unit and ongoing support from a district-level team.
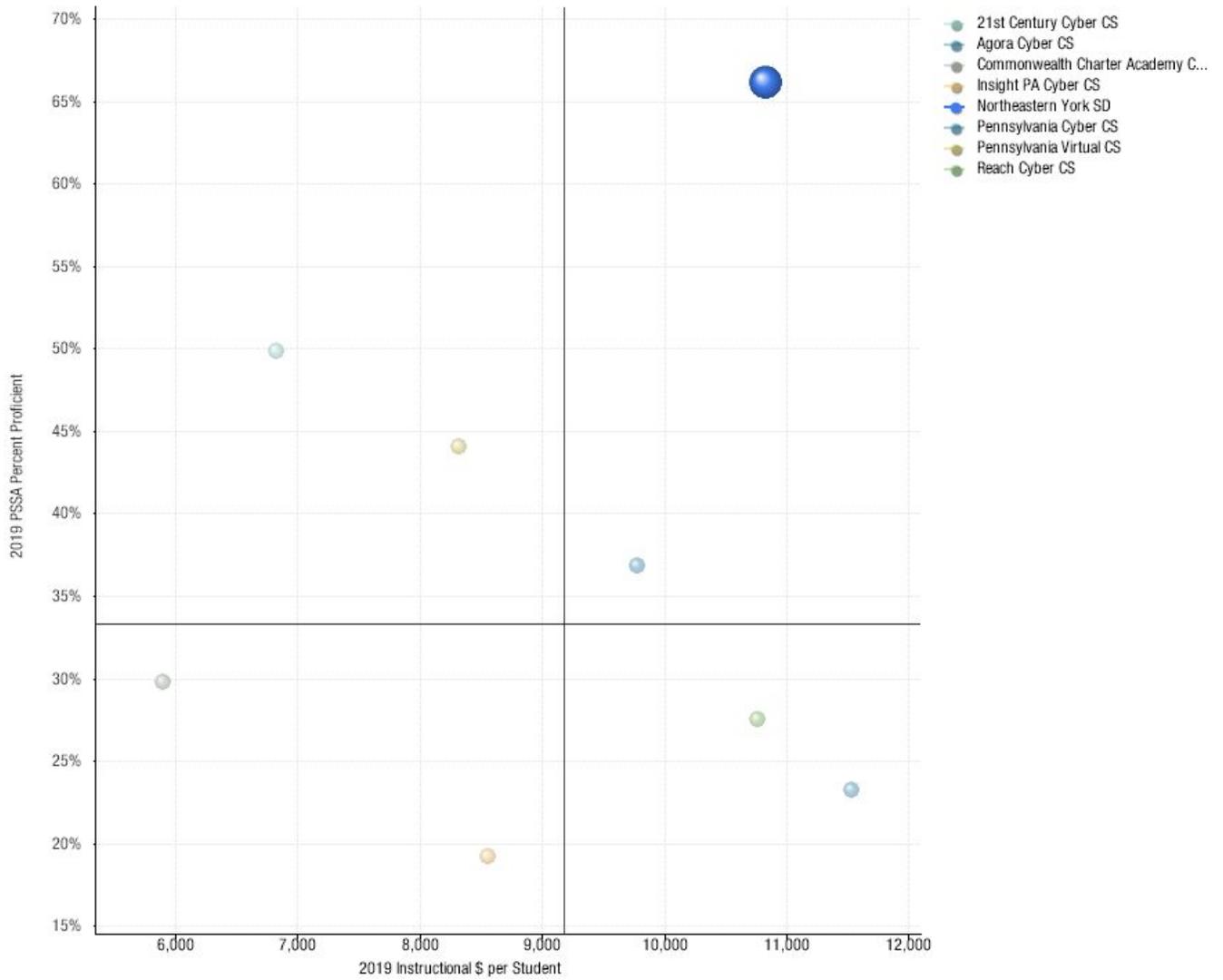
32. How will curriculum and grading look in the Bobcat Cyber Academy? The curriculum in the BCA is exactly the same as the Pennsylvania Core Standards-based curriculum that we are using in every grade level and content area now. Grading the BCA will look like grading in a typical classroom. Assignments will be as rigorous and comparable in volume to the amount of work assigned in the classrooms.

33. Will my students still be able to receive Title I reading help? Yes. Students who qualify for Title I reading will still be able to receive that.

34. How many hours a day will my Bobcat Cyber Academy student be in live lessons or working on assignments? K-4 students will have live instruction and work that totals at least 3 hours for the youngest students and at least 4 hours for the oldest students. Middle schoolers will have between 30-45 minutes of live instruction and independent work per course, per day. High schoolers will have about 60 minutes of live instruction and independent work per course, per day.

35. I'm concerned because this is a new program for NESD. I might be more comfortable sending my student to a cyber school that's been doing this for a long time. How does the achievement in the cyber charter schools compare to the achievement at NESD? NESD achievement is significantly higher than even the next closest school that's cyber. The graph below shows the achievement and per student spending for Northeastern school district and the achievement and per student spending for 7 Cyber Charter schools that are available to York County students. As you can see, Northeastern (the dark blue dot in the upper right quadrant) demonstrates the HIGHEST achievement of all options included. Furthermore, the per student costs are all used for public education in NESD, whereas the fees the District is required to pay Cyber Charter schools is inconsistently applied to providing education for students.

2019 PSSA % Proficient vs. 2019 Instructional $ per Student
(bubble size = 2019 % Free-Reduced Lunch)

Legend:
- 21st Century Cyber CS
- Agora Cyber CS
- Commonwealth Charter Academy C...
- Insight PA Cyber CS
- Northeastern York SD
- Pennsylvania Cyber CS
- Pennsylvania Virtual CS
- Reach Cyber CS

36. What about tuition? Does the Bobcat Cyber Academy have a fee? The Bobcat Cyber Academy is part of the Northeastern School District, our public school. Other cyber schools are charter schools, so last year they billed NESD $11,752.84 per student for general education and $25,906.97 for every student with an IEP. This fee is paid by the school district, but as you can see in the graphic above, cyber charter schools spend various amounts of money per pupil for the actual education. The rest of the fees the school district must pay are kept by these private companies.

Information to accompany the slide deck for the Bobcat Cyber Academy available on the website/social media:

Slide 1: Thank you for your interest in the Northeastern Bobcat Cyber Academy

Slide 2: The Northeastern York School District is offering an entirely digital program, K-12, for any interested students. As part of that program, students will have access to all of the services that are typically found at school, such as counselors, gifted, learning, and emotional support, related arts, and social-emotional instruction. Daily lessons, aligned to the PA Core Standards, will include both synchronous and asynchronous work, with students participating in live digital sessions with their teachers each day. Students enrolled in the Bobcat Cyber Academy are still enrolled in Northeastern School District, so they are, in every way, still Bobcats!

Slide 3: Some folks are confusing the Bobcat Cyber Academy with the Continuity of Education program that was provided during the spring quarantine. The primary responsibility of the staff during that time was to maintain contact/relationships with families and focus on "grace over grades" and "relationships over rigor." While we obviously value the relationships we have with our Bobcats, which is why we're so dedicated to providing this option for our families, we also recognize that it's time to return to the rigor that our students and families are accustomed to at Northeastern. Our BCA is essentially the rigor and expectations as our in-person instruction that you've come to expect from Bobcat teachers and classes. All of our in person classes are aligned to the PA Core Standards, and so are all of the courses in our BCA. They're one in the same curricula! Sometimes resources used to provide the instruction in person may vary from the tools and resources we can use online, but, overall, you'll see very similar programs.

Slide 4: Students in grades K-6 will enjoy dedicated teachers who only teach in our Bobcat Cyber Academy for their core subjects. So, BCA core subject teachers will not also be teaching in person classes each day.
In grades 7-12, BCA students will have access to content and course specialists who are teaching courses within their certification.
This ensures that all students have access to highly qualified teachers. This includes our students who have IEPs and GIEPs and require the support of special education or gifted support teachers.

Slide 5: Our Bobcat Cyber Academy has a K-6 principal, Mr. Clifton, and a 7-12 principal, Mr. Iezzi, as well as support from our Assistant Superintendent, Dr. Payne, and her administrative assistant, Mrs. Miller. There is also a counselor for elementary and one for secondary students should they need resources from our counseling department. Teachers and paraprofessionals are available every day for live instruction and support as needed! You might not be inside our school building, but our Bobcats are always in our care!

Slide 6: Students in the Bobcat Cyber Academy are Northeastern students, so they're welcome to come on campus to receive in person support, to take a specialty class (if campuses can be open), to participate in standardized testing, or to join in other activities. The teachers in the Bobcat Cyber Academy will offer live digital lessons and daily check ins for all students, in addition to recorded videos and other resources and independent/asynchronous work. In all, the amount of time students will spend on the BCA will be similar to the time spent learning in a typical school day.

Slide 7: As long as we're able to continue athletics, BCA students are welcome, and encouraged, to be part of our teams. When we're able to hold special events, performing arts, field trips, dances, and assemblies, Bobcat Cyber Academy students will be welcome to be part of all that, too! After all, those extras are part of what being a member of the Bobcat Community really means to many of our young people.

Slide 8: Students in the Bobcat Cyber Academy will utilize a district issued chromebook and will have access to the district's technology support. Any other materials that may be required, based on grade assignment or courses, will be provided by the district. Printers are not necessary for participation in the BCA.

Contact us to learn more about how the Bobcat Cyber Academy can work for your family.

Thank you!