

**CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

Monday, August 10, 2020 - Regular Meeting

7:00 p.m. – GoToWebinar

Members present: Ms. Krepchin, Dr. Ackman, Ms. Barish, Ms. Normand, Mr. Green, Ms. Pitone and Dr. Phillips and Mayor Curtatone.

Members absent: Mr. McLaughlin.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Normand was experiencing technical difficulty and so Vice Chair Ackman called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. with a moment of silence followed by a salute to the flag of the United States of America

Vice Chair Ackman asked the Superintendent to call the roll, results of which were as follows: PRESENT – 8 – Ms. Krepchin, Ms. Pitone, Ms. Barish, Mr. Green, Dr. Ackman, Ms. Normand, Dr. Phillips and Mayor Curtatone ABSENT – 1 - Mr. McLaughlin

II. PUBLIC COMMENT

Vice Chair Ackman announced that the committee would be revering to standard practice for public comment and 10 speakers would be allowed to comment with 2 minutes allotted for each. Those remaining would be invited to comment at the end of the meeting.

Chair Normand rejoined the meeting at 7:04 and thanked everyone present for joining and announced that tonight the School Department would be presenting a Reopening Plan, showcasing two models. A discussion and vote of the Reopening Plan is scheduled to take place at a School Committee Regular Meeting, next Monday, August 17, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. After the presentation tonight the committee will be taking up the revised calendar for the 2020-2021 School Year.

Chair Normand read the Public Comment guidelines and invited the six people who signed up to comment, to do so in the order called.

Elizabeth Janiak, 43 Springfield Street (Comment submitted to be included in minutes, full comment attached below)

A Public Health Researcher and Assistant Professor at Harvard Medical School commented that to promote the physical and mental health of children and families and the broader Somerville community, it is imperative that in person learning resumes as soon as possible for as many learners as possible. She added that some students are more adversely impacted by virtual instruction than others. Critically, this includes students in grades K through three. Ms. Janiak referenced a report by The National Academy of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine and A national panel of 12 independent experts, including public health scholars, academic experts on educational policy, and practicing elementary education leaders who conducted an exhaustive review of evidence weighing the risks against the benefits of resuming in person instruction. They found that elementary aged children may struggle with distance learning. This is the case, especially for children in grades K to three who are still developing the skills needed to regulate their own behaviors and emotions, maintain attention, and monitor their own learning. In addition, the long term consequences of being unable to make adequate progress through distance learning, may be more severe for students in grades K to three than for older students. She noted that because of the inconsistent and generally low quality of distance learning in the spring of 2020, rising third graders are starting well behind grade level due to the lack of learning from March through the end of their second grade year.

Ms. Janiak reported that simultaneously, the risk of viral transmission by children in grades three and below is very low. She referenced a large new study of 60,000 contacts in South Korea which found that only 5% of children ages nine and less contract COVID-19 when someone in their own home is infected. Less than half of the overall rate of infection among household contacts. The risk of transmission in schools with proper social distancing enhanced hygiene and universal masking is surely incredibly low overall and particularly among children ages nine and younger. She closed off by asking that Somerville prioritize in person learning for students pre K through Grade three along with other vulnerable learners.

Lianor Hillerstrom, 22 Cameron Avenue

Ms. Hillerstrom has a rising first grader with Down Syndrome in the Inclusion Pilot Program at the West Somerville

Neighborhood School, she is also the Secretary of the CPAC. She shared that the CPAC facilitated a town hall last Thursday night with over 100 concerned parents and reported that many shared that remote learning did not work for their children with special needs. Families want to know how the district will accommodate the disruption of services and progress lost over the past five months. They want to know why their children won't have the in person teaching and therapies they so desperately need and are also wondering why it is not possible for in person services and therapies to occur outside.

Beyond wanting to share these concerns, Ms. Hillersrom also addressed the District's plan to provide outdoor time for students during remote learning through Community Schools and the Somerville Recreation Department. She shared that she met with the Recreation Department a year and a half ago to discuss the possibility of her son attending summer camp before kindergarten and was told he would need a 1 to 1 aid, either provided by the district or by the family. Unfortunately, the district could not provide an aid for the Recreation Program and because Community Schools did not have the staff and resources to adequately support her son's toilet training plan and his behavior plan, Ms. Hillerstrom had to pull him from the afterschool program at the WSNS. She wishes the district will come to an agreement with community schools and the Recreation Department to provide outdoor time for all students during remote learning.

Sarah Campbell, 18A Charles Street

The parent of a rising first grader, Ms. Campbell began by announcing her believe that teachers are essential workers. They are an essential part of children's lives, the community, and the social safety net. And while teachers did not foresee a future pandemic when they decided to become teachers, the same is true for many other essential workers including factory workers, truck drivers, and grocery store employees. Second, Ms. Campbell asked the District to consider a shorter quarantine separation distance and earlier return to classrooms for the younger students, English Language Learners and Special Education students. And lastly, like many families in the area, both Ms. Campbell and her husband work full-time and do not have family nearby. For them, the remote or hybrid options are difficult. Many of the accommodations related to Zoom School put more pressure on parents to take on roles, which they do not have the bandwidth or preparation to do. She commented that expecting parents to teach in ways which they do not know, will put a strain on that relationship with their children and therefore hinder their learning. She added that we must recognize that without in class instruction, there will be children in Somerville who will be left home alone.

Rebecca Inzana

Looks forward to the day when we can begin the Hybrid model for the most vulnerable students. She realizes there are many pieces and stakeholders involved, but would like the District to be ready when the time comes that students are able to return to school buildings. The district needs to make sure the plans for the return to schools are completed. She is concerned that without a deadline for the back to school committees, the planning will be prolonged.

Karina Johanson, ESCS Educator, Medford Resident

Took this time to point out that many of the families at the East Somerville Community Schools do not speak English and ask if these meetings are being translated to Spanish as they are desperate for this information shared as well.

**III. REPORT OF SUPERINTENDENT
A. School Reopening Update**

Chair Normand thanked the School Administration and Staff for working on the plan that is being presented today. She invited Superintendent Skipper and her team to begin the presentation. Superintendent Skipper introduced member of her Cabinet as well as School staff who were in attendance to present. Among those present were the following: Dr. Jeff Curley- Chief of Staff, Sarah Davila- ELE Director, Elizabeth Doncaster- Student Services Director, Susana Hernandez Morgan- Communications Director, Francis Gorski- Finance Director, Regina Bertholdo- Enrollment Center Director, Christine Trevisone- Director of Special Education, Lisa Kuh- Early Education Director, Rosanna Paribello- Community Schools Director, Karen woods- Director of Educator Development, Jessica Boston Davis- Director of Equity and Excellence, John Breslin- Director of Technology, Mariana MacDonald- HR Director, Lisa Cook- Director of Continuing Education, Kenya Avant- Data Specialist, Rebecca Grainger- Superintendent Fellow, Sebastian LaGambina- SHS Principal, Margaret Green- NW/FC Principal, Alicia Kersten- Social Studies Department Chair, Jodi Remington- ELA Department Chair, Doug Kress- Health and Human Services Director and Rich Raiche- Director of Infrastructure and Asset Management.

Superintendent Skipper announced that School Districts were asked by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) to come up with 3 school reopening plans which consist of an In-person plan, a Remote plan and a

Hybrid plan. Tonight the Somerville school district will present 2 of these plans; the Remote and the Hybrid plan, as it was previously announced that Somerville would not be returning to an in-person model come September. Members of the School Team took turns presenting the slides of the Reopening Presentation, which is attached below. They discussed the following topics:

- The planning process and guiding values, which include prioritizing the health and welfare of students, staff and families and a transparent and inclusive process.
- The key factors considered; DESE guidelines, local health guidance, the ventilation and filtration of buildings and the need for adaptability.
- The three requested plans by DESE; Full in-person, Full Remote or Hybrid. And the two choices offered to Somerville families, a Phased-in Hybrid model and a Full Remote Learning model.
- The biggest difference between these two models, which is that with the Full Remote model students would remain in full remote learning even if conditions allowed for a partial return to in-person learning. The full Remote option is intended for families who would like to keep their children in full remote for the duration of the school year.
- The type of instruction students will receive; For full remote students will receive asynchronous (independent) lessons, instructional videos, interactive lessons and activities, and engage in learning at their own pace with limited live teacher support. SPS is currently considering and evaluating Edgenuity, Florida Virtual School (FLVS), and TECCA Connections Academy (Commonwealth Virtual School) as possible full remote delivery systems.
- Ongoing preparation for the Phased Hybrid model and school reopening, which includes purchasing PPE, building signage, planning for storage, District technology needs, developing health and safety protocols, classroom layouts, professional development and curriculum planning and collaboration.
- The Phased Hybrid model which consists of 5 phases: 1a- Teacher and Building preparation, 1b- Pre-K to 12 students all start out the year in remote learning engaging in synchronous and asynchronous learning, 2a&b – priority groups including Special Education Students and English learners will phase into 4 days of in-person learning excluding Wednesdays, 3a&b- grades Pre-k – 2 transition to the Hybrid Model separated into two groups, alternating two days a week of in-person learning with Wednesday remaining remote for all, and last phase 4- grades 3-8 begin the Hybrid Model, similar to the lower grades these students will rotate between two days in-person and three days remote.
- Maintaining a focus on Equity; each school will have an Equity Specialist working with the school's Instructional Leadership Team, the Director of Equity and Excellence and the school community to advance the anti-racism work and equity work in each school community.
- Phased Hybrid Learning at Somerville High School and Next Wave Full Circle and sample schedules for those students.
- Addressing and meeting the needs of Early Education students, Special Education students and English Language Learners.
- Family engagement; SFLC quickly responded and added a full time school based liaisons to every school, and an Immigrant Service Unit will be created.
- Meeting the social-emotional and mental health needs of students by increasing services, utilizing the embedded counseling services and developing an engagement tracker to help students stay connected and identifying emerging needs as well as supporting with students with 504 accommodation plans.
- Preparing for a safe environment and a safe return for all by spacing desks and tables 6 feet apart, purchasing additional sinks and space dividers and assessing air quality and HVAC systems in each building and implementing enhanced daily cleaning.
- Updating policies and procedures and establishing clear health and safety protocols and limiting building visitors.
- Professional Development offered throughout the Spring and the Summer of 2020.
- And lastly, District Finances and 3 COVID related grants awarded to Somerville; the CvRF Reopening Grant, the Remote Learning Technology Essentials Grant and the Elementary and Secondary Emergency Relief (ESSER Grant). These funds were used to purchase Chromebooks, PPE supplies furniture, counseling and other costs related to the reopening of schools.

Once the presentation came to a close Chair Normand opened the floor up for questions.

Ms. Pitone first thanked staff for their incredible work. She then brought up the need of having to revisit IEP's and asked about the capacity to meet this need. Ms. Trevisone explained that it is not necessarily rewriting IEP's but more looking at how services will be provided slightly differently with the synchronous and asynchronous components. Similar to what happened in the Spring but creating a more consistent and collaborative process.

Mr. Green shared that he's gotten feedback from parents who are concerned about their child staring at a screen for five to six hours a day and asked the superintendent to speak to the various ways students will be engaged. Superintendent Skipper explained that the synchronous learning will require some out of the box thinking, but it may entail class activities where students get to take time away from the screen or an assignment students are able to complete outside while exercising social distancing, or scheduling to meet students in the school tents at various times if allowed. Mr. Mazza added that there will be shortened blocks to allow students to meet with teachers and then to go explore and complete assigned work.

Dr. Phillis asked about how the district is supporting families who she believes are not represented in this presentation, which are families of students who are not in Early education, Special Education or in ELL and who have to work outside of the home and can't afford to pay for supplemental care.

Superintendent Skipper responded that for those students the district is looking at youth groups that we could potentially contract with, like Parkour or the YMCA, that could actually bring the students out in social distance. At the high school level, will also look at opportunities for internships, for the students to be able to work with younger students, which is a powerful model whenever possible. In general, the priority with the pre K to two is that they can't be alone and they really struggle with the remote learning, so to address them first is appropriate.

A conversation ensued about the difference between synchronous and asynchronous learning.

Dr. Ackman asked if there has been any guidance from the Department of Education regarding families who are living in different locations due to the current pandemic. But there hasn't been any guidance yet. Chair Normand thanked Dr. Ackman for this question and announced that she would be asking the Rules subcommittee to create a policy to address this issue within enrollment. And Superintendent Skipper asked the committee to expedite this piece.

Chair Normand then introduced the topic of the revised 2020-2021 School Calendar and asked the administration to speak to the changes. Mr. Mazza explained that there have been 10 additional days approved by DESE for planning and training for the return to school through Professional Development. Our district already had August 31st, and September 1st on the original calendar as PD days. We kept those as professional development days as we normally would, and added the 10 days immediately after. Therefore, the first day of school for grades 1 through 12 would be September 18th and the 25th would be our first day of school for pre-K and kindergarten students. The 10 days removed from the regular student schedule were evenly distributed among each quarter to ensure they would be similar in length.

Mr. Green asked about half day Wednesday and how those would work during full remote learning, and Superintendent Skipper responded that Wednesdays would be asynchronous but they have been left on the calendar with the hopes of being able to return to in-person learning.

Superintendent Skipper took this time to announce that Juneteenth is now a national holiday and although it falls on a Saturday, we are waiting for the city to adopt this holiday in order to add it to the calendar.

MOTION: There was a motion by Mr. Green, seconded by Dr. Ackman to approve the revised 2020-2021 School Calendar.

The motion was approved unanimously via roll call vote.

IV. ITEMS FROM BOARD MEMBERS

There were no items from board members.

V. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting was adjourned at 9:45 p.m.

Related documents:

Agenda

School Reopening Presentation

Revised 2020-2021 School Calendar

**CITY OF SOMERVILLE,
MASSACHUSETTS SCHOOL
COMMITTEE GOTOWEBINAR
REGULAR MEETING – AUGUST 10, 2020 – 7:00
P.M.**

Pursuant to Governor Baker’s March 12, 2020 Order suspending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. C. 30A, s. 18, and the Governor’s March 15, 2020 Order imposing strict limitations on the number of people that may gather in one place, as well as Mayor Curtatone’s Declaration of Emergency, dated March 15, 2020, this meeting of the Somerville School Committee will be conducted via remote participation. We will post an audio recording, audio-video recording, transcript, or other comprehensive record of these proceedings as soon as possible after the meeting on the City of Somerville website and local cable access government channels (SCAT).

Copy & paste the following link into your internet browser to preregister or on the date and time of this meeting to view it live:

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/8900891182748514571>

**Somerville Public Schools - School Committee Goals 2019 -
2022**

Through the following long-range goals, we commit to addressing deep-rooted systemic barriers that have prevented us from achieving our district vision of equity and excellence and ensuring that all students, regardless of race or ethnicity, have the supports and resources they need to achieve educational success in our district now and in the future. By 2022, we will ...:

...increase the percentage of support staff of color by 6 percentage points, teachers and counselors of color by 5 percentage points, and administrators of color by 4 percentage points through evaluating and strengthening all elements of our human capital system.

... 1) conduct a district enrollment study to understand the prospective future population of the district and 2) craft a vision for school assignment and programming aligned with the district’s equity policy.

... design, evaluate, and partially or fully implement student-based budgeting to ensure that every student has equitable access to rich learning opportunities that help them thrive.

... design a robust system of aligned developmental academic and social-emotional benchmarks which will be used to inform practices, policies, and resource allocation.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

I. CALL TO ORDER

Call to order with a moment of silence and a salute to the flag of the United States of America.

II. PUBLIC COMMENT

**III. REPORT OF
SUPERINTENDENT A.
School Reopening Update**

IV. ITEMS FROM BOARD MEMBERS

V. ADJOURNMENT

Our Planning Process

Planning for 2020-2021
School Committee | August 10



Guiding Values

Health and Safety

Prioritizes health and welfare of our students, staff, and families

Focused on Student Progress

Ensures students' education and personal development remains on track

Lens of Equity

Ensures that all students are properly supported and served

Healthy Process

Transparent and inclusive



Key Factors Considered in our Planning

- DESE guidelines
- Medical and scientific evidence
- Local health guidance
- Access to and processing speed of testing students and staff
- Ventilation and filtration of buildings
- Emerging best practices
- Unique context of our community
- Impact on families and staff
- Need for adaptability
- Union considerations

DESE Planning Requirements plan that includes 3 models

Full In-Person*

All students return to schools at the same time.

**Not a viable or safe option for us due to social distancing requirements, density of our community, and disproportionate impact of virus to communities of color*

Full Remote

All learning takes place remotely even when conditions allow for a partial return to in-person

Allows full access to a Learning Management System, supported by the District

Hybrid

Includes both in-person and remote components as conditions allow

Allows for phased re-entry, opportunity for safe social interaction, and continuity of learning

Family Choice

Families decide which of the two options best fits their priorities and needs.

Option One Phased Hybrid Model

begins in All Remote Learning mode

- Combination of synchronous (live) and asynchronous (independent) instruction
- Instruction and support by SPS educators
- Highly recommended for priority groups
 - Special Education students with significant complex needs
 - English Learners WIDA Level 1 and 2
 - Younger students: preK- grade 2

Option Two SPS Full Remote Learning Model

- Majority of instruction is asynchronous (independent work) with limited teacher support
- Learning Management System
- Designed for families who have their own support systems
- May also be appropriate for students who have a medical condition or have family circumstances that don't allow them to come to school in person because of the pandemic

Important Distinction between the 2 Models

Option 1 - Phased Hybrid Model:

allows for students to transition from All Remote Learning mode to a combination of in-person and remote learning as health and safety conditions allow. During remote learning periods in the Phased Hybrid Model, students will receive support from SPS educators through live instruction and independent work assignments.

Option 2: SPS Full Remote Learning Model: students will remain in Full Remote Learning even if conditions allow for a phased return to classrooms in the Phased Hybrid Model. This option is designed for students to engage in learning at their own pace, with limited teacher support.

In both Option 1 and 2, students will have the opportunity to engage in safe social interaction through partnerships with Somerville Parks and Recreation, Community Schools, and other youth-based programs and have access to remote Arts and Music.

The SPS Full Remote Option



Full Remote Learning Model Learning Management System

Students who select the SPS Full Remote Learning Model will remain in Full Remote Learning even when conditions allow for a partial return to in-person learning. This option is designed for students who want to remain **only** in a remote learning environment and engage in learning at their own pace utilizing a Learning Management System, with limited teacher support.

Full Remote Learning Model Learning Management Systems

SPS is currently considering the following Learning Management Systems as possible full remote delivery platforms:

- Edgenuity - edgenuity.com
- Florida Virtual School (FLVS) - flvs.net
- TECCA Connections Academy (Commonwealth Virtual School) - www.connectionsacademy.com/massachusetts-virtual-school

Full Remote Learning Model

This option is intended for families who intend to keep their students in full remote learning (no in-person learning) for the duration of the school year.

- daily instruction provided entirely through a remote platform with no in-person days of instruction
- students receive instruction through asynchronous (independent) lessons, instructional videos, interactive lessons and activities, and engage in learning at their own pace with limited live teacher support
- SPS is currently considering and evaluating Edgenuity, Florida Virtual School (FLVS), and TECCA Connections Academy (Commonwealth Virtual School) as possible full remote delivery systems
- option to shift to a different learning model being offered by SPS, be it the Phased Hybrid Learning Model or Full In-Person Learning Model as health and safety conditions dictate, on a quarterly basis
- opportunity to participate in Parks & Recreation, Community Schools, and other youth based in-person activities on remote days, to stay connected to their school and for safe social interaction
- Grades will be given and attendance taken.



Planning for a High-Quality Phased Hybrid Experience



Ongoing District Preparation for School Reopening

During this phase we are taking all necessary steps to ready schools (June to present).

- PPE purchasing
- Signage planning and creation
- Furniture and Divider Purchases
- Storage Container and Tent Orders
- Technology Needs (Staff and Students)
 - Assessment
 - Purchase
 - Distribution
- Health and Safety Protocol Development
- Testing Metrics
- Building Filtration and Ventilation Assessment
- Classroom Layouts
- Professional Development
- Curriculum Planning and Collaboration



Teacher and Building Preparation

During this phase we continue to prepare for staff and students. This includes:

- Teacher professional development, curriculum planning, and collaboration
- Training on health, safety, and sanitation protocols
- Storage containers and tent set-up
- Furniture delivery and set-up, Divider installation, Classroom Set-up
- **Building specific plans for filtration and ventilation mitigation**
- Continuation of technology needs assessment and distribution
- **Communication on Testing Capacity, Procedures and Thresholds**
- 12 day staff orientation (August 31-September 17)
- Time allocated for educators to connect with families; review of expectations for all remote learning; training for family and students on platforms and resources; Review of SEL supports for students; Distribution of take home resources for students



All Remote Learning

Grades preK-12 begin in an All Remote Learning mode.

Students in the All Remote Learning mode will be:

- taught by SPS educators
- engage in synchronous (live) and asynchronous (independent) learning
- option to enroll in Parks & Recreation, Community Schools, and other youth based in-person options



phased hybrid: priority group phase-in

Priority groups will phase into 4 days of in-person learning (M, T, Th, F)

SPS will phase-in priority groups in the following order:

- 2a - Special Education students with significant complex needs
- 2b - English Learners WIDA Level 1 and 2
- *Possible inclusion of Unidos WIDA Level 1

synchronous learning involves live, real-time instruction between a teacher and a student - can include combination of full group learning, small group/individualized learning and counseling, and independent work supervised by an educator

asynchronous learning involves a student engaging in independent work assigned by the teacher - can involve online work, small group work, or other activities assigned and completed independently by a student - may not require a computer to complete, allowing for variation in assignments including outdoor education activities and tasks using manipulatives

phase
3a&b

phased hybrid: priority group phase-in

Grades preK through 2 transition to Phased Hybrid Model
Student populations divided into two cohorts: Cohort A and Cohort B.

- Students will rotate between a two day in-person and three day remote schedule.
 - Cohort A receives full-day in-person instruction on Monday and Tuesday and remote learning Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday
 - Cohort B receives remote learning Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday and full-day in-person instruction on Thursday and Friday
 - All students learn remotely on Wednesdays while buildings are deep cleaned

SPS will phase-in priority younger grades in the following order:

- 3a - Pre-K and K
- 3b - grades 1 and 2

phase
4

phased hybrid: grades 3-8 phase in

Grades 3-8 enter Phased Hybrid Model

- Student populations divided into two cohorts: Cohort A and Cohort B.
- Students will rotate between a two day in-person and three day remote schedule.
 - Cohort A receives full-day in-person instruction on Monday and Tuesday and remote learning Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday
 - Cohort B receives remote learning Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday and full-day in-person instruction on Thursday and Friday
 - All students learn remotely on Wednesdays

SPS will phase-in priority younger grades in the following order:

- 4a - grades 3 and 4
- 4b - grades 5 and 6
- 4c - grades 7 and 8

For phases two, three, and four, where populations of students are engaging in in-person learning, if at any point the risk is considered too high, students will transition back to the all remote learning model.

Phased Hybrid Learning Model

Ongoing District Preparation for School Reopening

1 1a Teacher and Building Preparation
district staff engage in professional development and building preparation for 2020-21 start of school
1b all students return in All Remote Learning mode

2 priority populations transition into in-person learning
priority populations phased transition into 4 day in-person
2a Special Education students with significant complex needs and 2b English Learners WIDA Level 1 and 2

3 grades preK-2 transition into phased hybrid learning model
Grades preK-2 phased transition to two day in-person and three day remote schedule - Cohort A & B
3a Grades preK and K and 3b Grades 1 and 2

4 grades 3-8 transition into phased hybrid learning model
Grades 3-8 phased transition to two day in-person and three day remote schedule - Cohort A & B
4a Grades 3 and 4 4b Grades 5 and 6 4c Grades 7 and 8

Somerville HS, Next Wave/Full Circle, and SCALE

Future details after assessment on building ventilation and filtration

Planning for a High-Quality Phased Hybrid Experience
(Phase 1: All Remote)

Planning for a High-Quality, Phased Hybrid Experience
(Phase 1: All Remote)

As we begin the year in the Remote part of a Phased Hybrid Model, we are guided by our commitment to creating a high quality and comprehensive learning experience that supports the development of our students.

- **Significant face-to-face contact** through synchronous instruction with the priority on live instruction
- **Consistent weekly schedules** of student classes and activities with clear work expectations for the week
- **Increased small group and individual (1:1) learning experiences**
- **Clear expectations** about attendance, participation, work completion, and grading
- **Access to technology and reliable internet service** to support learning for staff and students
- **Increased educator feedback** to guide student learning and development

Planning for a High-Quality Phased Hybrid Experience

- **Weekly communications with families and support for staff communication with families** in multiple languages and in multiple ways
- **A variety of social emotional supports** to address mental health needs.
- **Proposed daily synchronous instruction time** by grade bands (pending negotiations):
 - Pre K & K: 2 hours
 - Grades 1-3: 3 hours
 - Grades 4 & 5: 4 hours
 - Grades 6-12: 5 hours
- **Materials provided for students** to have both at home and in school such as academic and art supplies, science materials, reading books, and math and ELA workbooks
- **Meaningful independent work** tied to previous instruction and accessible with minimal at-home adult supervision on all remote days.
- **In-person Community-building and play-based activities** provided by Parks & Recreation, Community Schools and other youth providers on the all remote days



Maintaining a Focus on Equity



Advancing Equity

Advancing Equity Task Force

- 19 SPS staff members from various roles worked throughout the summer to address equity and inequity in SPS's policies and practices.

School-Based Equity Specialists

- Each school will have an equity specialist to work with the school Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) and School Site Council (SSC), Principal, Director for Equity and Excellence, and the school community to advance the anti-racism and equity work in each school community.

Anti-Bias/ Anti-Racist Training and PD

- Content will include sessions on identity, implicit-bias, deficit-based thinking, culturally relevant pedagogy, critical-consciousness, and abolitionist teaching.
- Sessions for students, families, and school and District leaders will also be a core focus of our work throughout the year.

School Equity in Action Plans

- Each school and department will continue the development and implementation of their Equity in Action Plan.
- Plans will be modified so that equity can be addressed in a remote or in-person learning model.

Continued Partnerships

- We will continue the partnerships with: New York City Leadership Academy, the Harvard Graduate School of Education, TNTP, Teen Empowerment, Facing History and Ourselves, and Teaching Tolerance.
- Looking forward to new partnerships with Dr. Daren Graves, Dr. Sarah Fiarman, SEED, YW, and UnboundEd to advance equity in our schools.

Phased Hybrid Learning at SHS

- Guiding Principles for planning remote & hybrid learning
 - Health and safety
 - Keep equity and social and emotional learning needs at the forefront
 - Build community and connection
 - Increase student engagement and accessibility
 - Meet individual student needs
- Focus areas
 - Relationship building
 - Increase student support
 - High quality remote learning lesson planning
 - Support teachers with planning & implementing PBAs
 - Effective feedback

Phased Hybrid Learning at SHS (Sample Schedule)

Week A					
Time	Monday	Tuesday	Thursday	Friday	Wednesday
8:00-9:00	Independent work time; school to work programs; School Counselor or CCR meetings by appointment; and/or remote class 7				Independent work time; school to work programs; School Counselor or CCR meetings by appointment; student/mentor check-ins; and/or remote class 7
9:00-10:30	1	1	1	1	
10:45-12:15	2	2	2	2	
12:15-12:45	Lunch Break				
12:45-2:15	3	3	3	3	
2:15-3:15	Independent work time; school to work programs; School Counselor or CCR meetings by appointment and/or student/mentor check-ins; and/or remote class 7				

Week B					
Time	Monday	Tuesday	Thursday	Friday	Wednesday
8:00-9:00	Independent work time; school to work programs; School Counselor or CCR meetings by appointment; and/or remote class 7				Independent work time; school to work programs; School Counselor or CCR meetings by appointment; student/mentor check-ins; and/or remote class 7
9:00-10:30	4	4	4	4	
10:45-12:15	5	5	5	5	
12:15-12:45	Lunch Break				
12:45-2:15	6	6	6	6	
2:15-3:15	Independent work time; school to work programs; School Counselor or CCR meetings by appointment and/or student/mentor check-ins; remote class 7				

Phased Hybrid Learning at NW/FC (Sample Schedule)

Phased Hybrid Learning at Next Wave/Full Circle

- Guiding Principles for planning remote & hybrid learning
 - Narrow the focus
 - Keep it Concise
 - Lower the barriers
 - Address Equity
 - Individualize
- Focus on:
 - Community & Relationships
 - Competencies (Argue, Discern & Connect)
 - Support teachers with planning & implementing PBL
 - Effective feedback & progress towards individual goals
 - Celebrations & Core Values

group 1	group 2	group 3	group 4	group 5	MS-group 6	MS-group 7
Class A	Outside community	WIN block	Class A	Class A	Outside community	WIN block
outside community	Class A	Class A	Outside community	WIN block	WIN block	Outside classroom
Class B	WIN block	Outside community	Class B	Outside classroom	Class A	Class B
Lunch in room	Lunch in WIN	Lunch outside	Lunch in room	Lunch outside	Lunch in Room	Lunch in Room
Outside classroom	Class B	Outside classroom	WIN block	Class B	Outside classroom	Class A
WIN Block	Outside classroom	Class B	Outside classroom	Outside Community	Class B	Outside Community

Proposed all-day schedule
 Students come Mon/Tues or Thurs/Fri. Wed all remote (deep clean day)
 7 groups of students per day paired with 2 teachers
 Focus on 1-2 projects a quarter

Outside community builds—both teachers present. Free park team building fun games
Outside academic—both teachers present
 7 spots: garden and parking lot
 -Use shed if garden for materials or staff
 Write outside switches to gym and call?

What I need: WIN/Block / remote or PBL - individual & small group support
 5 grid up (procedures need to be done or who they're scheduled with)
 -20-30 min skills - (30-40) future planning OR trying practice game
 -project check in
 -work with your academic teacher (A or B)
 -Check in with students, get them started, then co-plan
 -Build your incentives, check goals-give with Jack/Romano
 -counseling times (on walk)
 -Clinical-pull kids, outside walk?
 -pull out reading or ESL
 -IL
 -Jeds
 -Edgenuity/Credit recovery

Project Based Remote Learning at NW/FC (Sample Schedule)

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
	Asynchronous learning time based on students needs				
10 - 1045	Class A	Class A	Staff PLC's focus on student engagement practices and curriculum planning. Students focus on group work.	Class A	Class A
1045 - 1115	Group work and small group instruction	Group work and small group instruction		Group work and small group instruction	Group work and small group instruction
1115 - 1200	Class B	Class B		Class B	Class B
12 - 1230	Counseling Group w/ Teacher Counselor	Group work and small group instruction	Staff provides one on one and small group instruction	Counseling Group w/ Teacher Counselor	Group work and small group instruction
1230 - 1	Lunch	Lunch		Lunch	Lunch
1 - 145	WIN Block	WIN Block		WIN Block	WIN Block
	Asynchronous learning time based on students needs				

Students are given weekly learning objectives with clear rubrics for expectations. Asynchronous learning is provided so students have options on how/when to access content and skills. Synchronous learning focuses on making connections, dialogue and collaboration. Students are encouraged to revise and resubmit work until they have met the current competency.

Students will meet 2x a week with counseling group & teacher/counselor



Meeting the Needs of Preschool Students

Phased Hybrid Model



Early Education

SPS Learning Focus

- Authentic, integrated, hands-on learning experiences – math, literacy, science, art, social studies, social emotional development, work habits
- Realistic, flexible schedules
- Consistent experiences across classrooms with a team of collaborating teachers, coach supported
- Daily synchronous & asynchronous offerings from classroom teachers and specialists
- Guided focus on outdoor education, play as learning, project approach

Family-School Connection

- Building community virtually and in-person, orientation videos, creating school culture
- Weekly family calls/zooms
- Within-group small learning cohorts to create peer connections
- Modeling and home language instructions to support learning experiences, materials to use at home
- Instruction in technology and platforms, access to needed tech



Meeting the Needs of Special Education Students

Phased Hybrid Model



Special Education - Instruction and Services Model of Delivery

Students receive special education instruction and related services necessary to provide FAPE through an instruction and services model of delivery:

- Structured Lessons
- Teletherapy
- Video-based lessons

A regular and consistent schedule of classes, interventions, services and therapies as required by the student's IEP will be offered synchronously and asynchronously.

Development of a COVID-19 Learning Model Family Communication Plan:

- Consultation with families to obtain parental input regarding proposed differences in provision of special education services through a phased in hybrid model starting remotely
- How accommodations, modifications, and services outlined in the IEP will be provided in the remote environment
- Identify what a parent should expect in the way of regular, ongoing communication from their child's special education case manager/liaison, related service personnel, and teachers.

Any potential changes in the delivery of services due to a school's change in learning model, in-person, hybrid, or remote, as a result of Covid-19 does not result in a change in placement.

Special Education

Eligibility (Initial and Re-Evaluation)

- Special education testing related to eligibility will occur face to face outdoors during the Phased-In Hybrid Model.
- Will move to a REED (Review of Existing Evaluation Data) model for eligibility if and when we are no longer able to test outdoors in a secure area.

Transition for Early Intervention (EI):

- Extension of EI services until October 15th
- Somerville working to complete evaluation process prior to October 15th
- Determine which students could be found eligible for special education due to the nature and impact of disabilities while awaiting formalized assessments

Team Meetings

Team meetings will continue to occur remotely and extend into the Phased In Hybrid Model to limit the number of people entering SPS buildings in accordance with state and local guidance.

Transportation

- It may not be possible to meet all health and safety requirements for transporting all students.
- We will ask for parents help in transporting students to and from school when possible and offer Parent Reimbursement for parents who can transport their child.

Special Education - Other Important Considerations

- Progress monitoring and data collection
- Progress reports
- MCAS ALT
- Specialized Safety Supplies/Protective Equipment and Training
- Out of District Students
- Considerations for Students with High-Risk Medical Conditions



Meeting the Needs of Language Learner Students

Phased Hybrid Model



Instructional Delivery: ESL and Meaningful Access to Content Learning with Sheltered Practices

- Priority students include students at English Proficiency Levels 1 and 2, newly arrived language learners, Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education (SLIFE), and Kindergarten - grade 2 students in the Unidos Program (English Learners and English Speakers)
- Daily ESL synchronous or in-person with scheduled double blocks for Levels 1 and 2 and daily block for Levels 3 - 5
- ESL instructional support including 1 on 1 pre-teaching and reinforcement of language skills
- Transportation provided with new health and safety measures, assigned seats, and double-/triple-loop runs to minimize number of students on bus. We will encourage walking and other safe routes to school.

Instructional Delivery: ESL and Meaningful Access to Content Learning with Sheltered Practices

- Teacher collaboration for curriculum development, instructional planning, and co-delivery of lessons
- Interactive lessons that engage students across domains (listening, speaking, reading, writing)
- Assessment, frequent feedback to students, progress monitoring and reporting to parents, and Success Plans developed for those students not making progress
- Sheltered and scaffolding techniques for meaningful access to English Language Development and grade level content learning
- Culturally relevant and high-interest curriculum and material
- Multiple opportunities for family engagement in learning

Somerville Family Learning Collaborative Response to COVID-19

SFLC Staff quickly repurposed and made thousands of points of contact to assess and respond to family needs.

Full-time School Based Liaisons in every school for family outreach, resource and referral, basic needs, and emergency benefits counseling.

Immigrant Services Unit created in collaboration with the city and school district. A cross-sector team of multilingual staff provided intensive support to hundreds of families in the schools and community at-large.

Based on strong relationships with families and trusted partnerships with city and community, **SFLC will continue to support conditions for learning, equitable access to internet and devices, and avenues for family voice**



Meeting the Needs of Families

Somerville Family Learning Collaborative



Meeting Social-Emotional and Mental Health Needs



Student Services - Social Emotional and Mental Health Support

Increased SEL and Mental Health services are a central focus in supporting students, families, and staff with the transition back to school.

Embedded counseling services through partner agencies nearly doubled during emergency closure and through the summer.

Development and use of Engagement Tracker to help students stay connected and identify emerging needs.

District SEL Task Force and building-level teams to support Social Emotional Learning

Will support teachers as they supplement *Second Step* curriculum with Covid 19 and anti bias lessons

Support social emotional and mental health through partnerships that allow **opportunities for students to safely come together in outside environment**

Student Services - Other Supports

Supporting students with **504 Accommodation Plans**

The role of the school **Student Services Team** in connecting students with appropriate supports and interventions.

Development and use of Engagement Tracker to help students stay connected and identify emerging needs

Professional Learning Opportunities for Counselors, Deans of Students and Redirects

Focusing on **equitable, trauma-informed, proactive restorative practices** to help students through challenging times

Student Services - Extended Learning

Working with **Community Schools, Parks & Recreation Department**, and community partners to offer outdoor and remote enrichment programming for students. Registration will begin the week of August 17.

Initial outdoor programming will be focused for PK-2 students across **schoolyards, fields, and parks**

Programming will be **scheduled around the hybrid model** to ensure a smooth student transition from full-remote to phased hybrid

Parks and Recreation Department options will be **free and include district meals**

Outdoor enrichment options will be **expanded for older students** over time; remote enrichment options will also be available

Preparing for a safe return to our school buildings



Preparing for a Safe Return to our Buildings

Protective Equipment

- Staff & families are encouraged to provide the mask they prefer
- SPS has already ordered 270,000 masks; 24,000 pairs of gloves; and hundreds of face shields.

Enhanced Cleaning

- Custodial staff will conduct enhanced daily cleaning & sanitizing
- DPW purchased more electrostatic sprayers to disinfect buildings
- Removing items and furniture that are difficult to clean or disinfect

Professional Development



Professional Development

Start of the School Year:

- DESE: 10 additional days for planning and professional development
- PD focus areas: Equity, Covid-19 procedures and routines, best practices for remote learning and engagement, utilizing online platforms (Zoom and Google classroom), trauma and social emotional learning, engaging in effective student and family outreach, and exploring means of productive assessment

2020-2021 School Year

- Continued variety of offerings for educator choice PD
- Continued focus on equity, remote/hybrid learning, and trauma and social emotional learning
- Gauge and respond to educators' needs

Preparing for a Safe Return to our Buildings

SPS is doing everything it can to create **safe environments** for students and staff

School & Classroom Setup

- Desks & tables spaced 6 feet apart
- Sinks or sanitizer stations in classrooms
- Virus shields placed in high traffic areas
- Quarantine rooms in every school

Air Quality

- All schools assessed in terms of air quality/circulation
- Most buildings have up-to-date HVAC systems
- SPS is investing in
 - Air handlers, filters, fans
 - Outdoor tents

Policies and Procedures for a Safe Return

Daily health assessments and virus surveillance testing plan to minimize risk

Agreement on **community health and preparedness indicators** in coordination with the Somerville Board of Health

Establishing clear **health and safety protocols** for school campuses - masks and face coverings, hand washing and sanitizing, physical distancing, bathroom guidelines, sharing of materials

Changes to classrooms and office spaces to support health and safety guidelines

Flow of traffic in school buildings and campus, and during arrival and dismissal

Limiting visitors to minimize risk

Professional Development

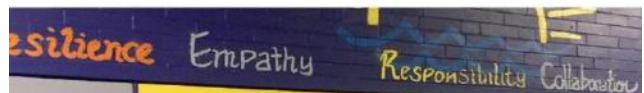
Spring 2020

- Weekly PD offerings beginning March 23rd
- PD focus areas:
 - Online learning tools (Google classroom, Zoom, FlipGrid, Screencastify, etc.)
 - Staff wellness
- Thousands of hours logged by a diverse group of educators and staff

Summer 2020

- Summer PD Catalog focus areas:
 - Equity
 - Remote Learning Best Practices
 - Trauma and Social Emotional Learning
 - Transition back to school

Finance



Funding to Support the Plan

CvRF Reopening Grant funded at \$225 per pupil for a total of \$1,098,450

- Funding to be utilized for Chromebooks, PPE, Furniture, and other costs related to the reopening of school.

Remote Learning Technology Essentials Grant - application submitted

- Funding to be utilized for a portion of our Chromebook purchase.

Elementary and Secondary Emergency Relief (ESSER) - \$947,449

- Funding for Counseling, SPED, Technology, Furniture and other costs related to reopening and operations during the Covid crisis.



- The SPS Reopening Plan will be available at www.somerville.k12.ma.us/back-school-2020 at 5:00pm on Wednesday, August 12th.
- Re-registration will be going live the week of August 17th, and families will receive additional information on the re-registration at that time.
- The process for families who want to opt for the Full Remote Learning Model using the Learning Management System or who want to enroll in Parks & Recreation and Community Schools in-person outdoor offerings will start the week of August 17th.

2020-2021 School Calendar

Important Dates

August '20				
M	T	W	TH	F
3	4	5	6	7
10	11	12	13	14
17	18	19	20	21
24	25	26	27	28
31				

September '20				
M	T	W	TH	F
	1	2	3	4
7	8	9	10	11
14	15	16	17	18
21	22	23	24	25
28	29	30		

October '20				
M	T	W	TH	F
			1	2
5	6	7	8	9
12	13	14	15	16
19	20	21	22	23
26	27	28	29	30

November '20				
M	T	W	TH	F
2	3	4	5	6
9	10	11	12	13
16	17	18	19	20
23	24	25	26	27
30				

December '20				
M	T	W	TH	F
	1	2	3	4
7	8	9	10	11
14	15	16	17	18
21	22	23	24	25
28	29	30	31	

January '21				
M	T	W	TH	F
				1
4	5	6	7	8
11	12	13	14	15
18	19	20	21	22
25	26	27	28	29

February '21				
M	T	W	TH	F
1	2	3	4	5
8	9	10	11	12
15	16	17	18	19
22	23	24	25	26

March '21				
M	T	W	TH	F
1	2	3	4	5
8	9	10	11	12
15	16	17	18	19
22	23	24	25	26
29	30	31		

April '21				
M	T	W	TH	F
			1	2
5	6	7	8	9
12	13	14	15	16
19	20	21	22	23
26	27	28	29	30

May '21				
M	T	W	TH	F
3	4	5	6	7
10	11	12	13	14
17	18	19	20	21
24	25	26	27	28
31				

June '21				
M	T	W	TH	F
	1	2	3	4
☆	8	9	10	11
14	15	16	17	18
21	22	23	24	25
28	29	30		

31 – 1st day for Staff: Prof. Development

August

September – 9 days

- 1 – Staff Prof. Development & Planning
- 2-17 – DESE-Approved Planning & PD Days
- 4 – No school (Offices Open)
- 7 – No school - Labor Day
- 18 – 1st day for students in grades 1-12
- 19-20 – Rosh Hashanah *
- 25 – 1st day for Kindergarten and Pre-K Students
- 28 – Yom Kippur *

October – 21 days

12 – No school – Indigenous Peoples' Day

November – 17 days

- 3 – No school – Election Day, Prof. Devel. 8-12/PTA Conf. 12:30 – 2:30
- 11 – No School – Veterans Day
- 14 – Diwali
- 25 – Begin Thanksgiving Recess at noon

December – 17 days

- 11 – 18 – Hanukkah *
- 23 – Begin winter recess at close of school (Includes Christmas – 12/25 and Kwanzaa – 12/26)

January – 19 days

- 1 – No School – New Year's day
- 4 – Classes resume
- 6 – Three Kings Day/ Dia De Los Reyes
- 18 – No school – Martin Luther King Day

February – 15 days

- 12 – Lunar New Year
- 15 – 19 – February Vacation (includes Presidents' Day)

March – 23 days

- 3/28 – 4/03 – Passover *
- 29 – Holi

April – 16 days

- 2 – No school - Good Friday
- 4 – Easter
- 19 – 23 – April Vacation (includes Patriots Day)
- 4/13 – 5/11 – Ramadan *

May – 20 days

- 13 – Eid al-Fitr *
- 28 – Class Day (Tentative)
- 31 – No school – Memorial Day

June – 13 days

- 7 – Graduation (Tentative)
- 17 – Last day of school (170 days)
- 24 – 175th day

Prof. Dev. for teaching staff

○ Half-Day ALL students PK-12

☆ Special Dates for Seniors

Quarters

- 1st Quarter 9/18-11/19 (43 days)
- 2nd Quarter 11/20-2/2 (42 days)
- 3rd Quarter 2/3-4/12 (43 days)
- 4th Quarter 4/13-6/17 (42 days)

Half-Day Wednesdays

- Dismissal @ 11:30 (PK) Noon (K-8)
- Sept. 23
 - Oct. 14, 28
 - Dec. 9
 - Jan. 13, 27
 - Feb. 10
 - Mar. 10, 24
 - Apr. 7
 - May 12, 26

Jan. 27

For more information or for any questions, please contact Katherine Santiago-
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Major Religious & Cultural Holidays
Dates underlined above represent the district's major religious and cultural holidays. All Jewish and Islamic holidays starred above begin at sundown the previous day. Somerville Public Schools staff members will do their best to refrain from scheduling one-time events, field trips, athletic competitions, auditions, tests, quizzes for these days. Long-term assignments will not be due on the day of or the day after one of these holidays.

COMMENTS SUBMITTED TO BE INCLUDED IN THESE MINUTES.

Testimony of Elizabeth Janiak, ScD
Somerville School Committee
August 10, 2020

I'm Professor Liz Janiak, a public health researcher at Harvard Medical School. I live at 43 Springfield St.

To promote the physical and mental health of children, families, and the broader Somerville community, it is imperative that in-person learning resumes as soon as possible for as many learners as possible. However, we all know that some students are more adversely impacted by virtual instruction than others. Critically, this includes students grades K-3—not K-2, but K-3.

The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine recently issued a report, *Reopening K-12 Schools During the COVID-19 Pandemic: Prioritizing Health, Equity, and Communities*. A national panel of 12 independent experts including public health scholars, academic experts on educational policy, and practicing elementary education leaders conducted an exhaustive review of evidence weighing the risks against the benefits of resuming in-person instruction. As this expert panel observes:

“Children and youth of all ages benefit from in-person learning both academically and emotionally. ...The consequences of long-term distance learning are likely to differ depending on the age of students...Elementary-aged children may struggle with distance learning...This is the case especially for children in grades K-3, who are still developing the skills needed to regulate their own behaviors and emotions, maintain attention, and monitor their own learning. ...In addition, the long-term consequences of being unable to make adequate progress through distance learning may be more severe for students in grades K-3 than for older students. Research has demonstrated long-term, negative consequences for children who are not reading at grade level by third grade.” *Reopening K-12 Schools During the COVID-19 Pandemic: Prioritizing Health, Equity, and Communities*, page 331

Of note, because of the inconsistent and generally low quality of virtual instruction in the spring of 2020, our rising third graders are starting well behind grade level due to the lack of learning from March through the end of their second grade year—a full third of second grade missed.

Simultaneously, the risk of viral transmission by children in grades 3 and below is very low. You have heard this data point before. A large new tracing study of 60,000 contacts in South Korea again found that *children ages 9 and younger rarely spread the virus even to people in their own homes during a nationwide shutdown that kept families indoors together 24 hours a day.*² These findings echo earlier studies that likewise found young children almost never transmit the

COVID-19 virus to other children or to adults.³ It is critical to understand that while measures such as enhanced ventilation may constitute a common sense safety measure during the pandemic, *children age 9 and younger appear to almost never transmit COVID-19 to other children or to adults even inside their own homes with no precautionary measures in place.*^{2,3} The risk of transmission by young children in schools with proper social distancing, enhanced hygiene, and universal masking is surely low overall, and particularly among children ages 9 and younger.

Somerville must prioritize in-person learning for students PK-3 along with other vulnerable learners. Third grade students both need in-person instruction urgently and pose less than minimal risk as vectors of the novel coronavirus that causes COVID-19 disease. Since neither their needs nor the risks they pose differ from second grade students, it is not ethical to deny third graders priority access to in-person instruction.

Professor Janiak's Bio and Contact Information

Elizabeth Janiak, ScD, is an Assistant Professor at Brigham and Women's Hospital and Harvard Medical School, and an Instructor at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health. She studies disparities in access to and quality of reproductive health care, with a focus on inequities according to race, gender, age, and disability. Professor Janiak earned a doctorate in Social and Behavioral Sciences from the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health and completed her postdoctoral training at Harvard Medical School. Her son was an Argenziano second grader in the 2019-2020 school year.

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