

School Reopening Update

December 21, 2020

Building Improvements

Building improvements update

- ▶ Scope of work review:
 - ▶ Minimum threshold for occupancy
 - ◆ Filtration – increase to MERV-13
 - ◆ Ventilation – retro-commission air handling equipment, handle additional pressure from filters
 - ▶ Additional work while buildings are occupied
 - ◆ Disinfection – UV germicidal irradiation
 - ◆ Humidification
- ▶ Consistent with Harvard School of Public Health

Building completion update

- ▶ December 7th meeting update:
 - ▶ Initial contractors' schedules indicated completion dates of April 2021, citing long lead times for equipment and materials
- ▶ Efforts week of Dec 7 & 14:
 - ▶ Technical submittal review
 - ▶ Physical work started
 - ▶ City aggressively worked with contractors and suppliers for critical elements, reduced lead times from 8 - 12 weeks to 2 - 3 weeks

Construction schedule risk factors

- ▶ **Supply chain**
 - ▶ Constantly evolves
 - ▶ Actively managing
- ▶ **Labor force**
 - ▶ General availability
 - ▶ C-19 impacts
- ▶ **Schedule estimates**
 - ▶ Accuracy of projections
 - ▶ Quality of details
- ▶ **Design omissions**
 - ▶ Adds work
 - ▶ Higher risk given lack of detailed design
- ▶ **Unforeseen conditions**
 - ▶ Changes/Adds work
 - ▶ Higher risk given lack of detailed design
- ▶ **Complexity/Quantity of work**

Projecting construction completion

- ▶ Contractors are developing detailed schedules
 - ▶ Subject to change in short-term based on supply chain, labor availability, clarification of design
 - ▶ Subject to additional delays due to estimates and unforeseen conditions
- ▶ Initial schedule estimates informing work prioritization
 - ▶ IAM working closely with SPS
 - ▶ Active coordination required throughout project

Preliminary construction schedule

		Ventilation & Filtration Improvements																				
Projected Completion		D	January					February				March					April				May	
Optimistic	Pessimistic	28	4	11	18	25	1	8	15	22	1	8	15	22	29	5	12	19	26	3	10	
New High School	4-Jan-21	18-Jan-21					N/F															
Capuano School	25-Jan-21	15-Feb-21																				
East Somerville	25-Jan-21	1-Mar-21																				
High School Mods	8-Feb-21	1-Mar-21																				
Argenziano School	8-Feb-21	15-Mar-21																				
West Somerville	8-Feb-21	15-Mar-21																				
Kennedy School	1-Mar-21	5-Apr-21																				
Healey School	22-Mar-21	19-Apr-21																				
Winter Hill	12-Apr-21	10-May-21																				

Note: These are construction completion dates. Student occupancy will follow these dates.
 Humidification & UV disinfection improvements may continue during occupancy.
 As of 21 Dec 2020, Group 1 schedule has the most detail, Group 3 has the least detail.

Building Occupancy

- ▶ Our plan is to utilize school buildings as available to return students in the phases identified in our Reopening Plan
- ▶ Once we know the exact construction completion dates, the district can finalize all of the other elements and start our transition to in-person instruction. Those pieces include:
 - ▶ Surveying families to determine return plans
 - ▶ Scheduling transportation for Special Education and English Language students
 - ▶ Baseline COVID testing all returning students and staff
 - ▶ Moving and setting up classrooms as needed
 - ▶ Continuing to work with our unions to negotiate any changes in working conditions

Deciding to Open & Close Schools

Approach Guided by Public Health Experts

“Schools should use metrics of community spread as general points of information, not on-off switches for closure and opening, and should focus their own attention on developing ways to measure any in-school transmission and the quality of their infection control regime, in relation to the elements of infection control laid out below. For in-school transmission, the goal should be zero or near zero transmission.”

Schools and the Path to Zero: Strategies for Pandemic Resilience in the Face of High Community Spread, December 18, 2020

<https://globalepidemics.org/2020/12/18/schools-and-the-path-to-zero-strategies-for-pandemic-resilience-in-the-face-of-high-community-spread/?fbclid=IwAR1R8cngHpGqXdTFTvFNj6wr-zgyBZEmy-cxxoulrKRqngbtChIXM60IOac>

Pillars of School Reopening

- ▶ Ventilation and filtration system improvements
- ▶ Robust COVID-19 testing program
- ▶ Physical distancing / reduced density
- ▶ PPE
- ▶ Health and safety protocols

When to reopen?

- ▶ Community prevalence gives us limited information:
 - ▶ Community prevalence is NOT the indicator of when schools should be opening or to what degree
 - ▶ Community prevalence illustrates one small piece of what would be relevant to our school system (staff living outside the district, most demographics represented in our testing data are not related or representative of our school system...)
 - ▶ Relying solely on community prevalence data puts us at the mercy of systems we do not and will not be able to control.
- ▶ Reopening decision should be primarily based on our ability to track and understand transmission in schools.
- ▶ Reopening should be primarily driven by our ability to significantly mitigate and manage risk for staff and students and have real time data about any possible COVID transmission within the schools.

Decision Making once Schools are Open

- ▶ Based on the robustness of our screening (testing) protocol, we will be able to reduce the risk of unnecessary closures.
- ▶ As a result, decisions about adding additional phases or closing schools will be primarily guided by the data we're getting from our SPS testing program and contact tracing.
- ▶ City, county, and state data will continue to be used to help us understand the broader context.

How to decide when to reopen and when to close?

- ▶ Recommendations about opening the schools and closing individual schools and the full district will be made by the School Opening Advisory Group to the Mayor and Superintendent.
- ▶ Decisions about moving classrooms or cohorts within a school to remote learning will be made immediately by SPS and City staff.
- ▶ Members of the Advisory Group will review community and school data weekly.
- ▶ All of the data available to the Advisory Group will be publicly available on the SPS COVID dashboard.

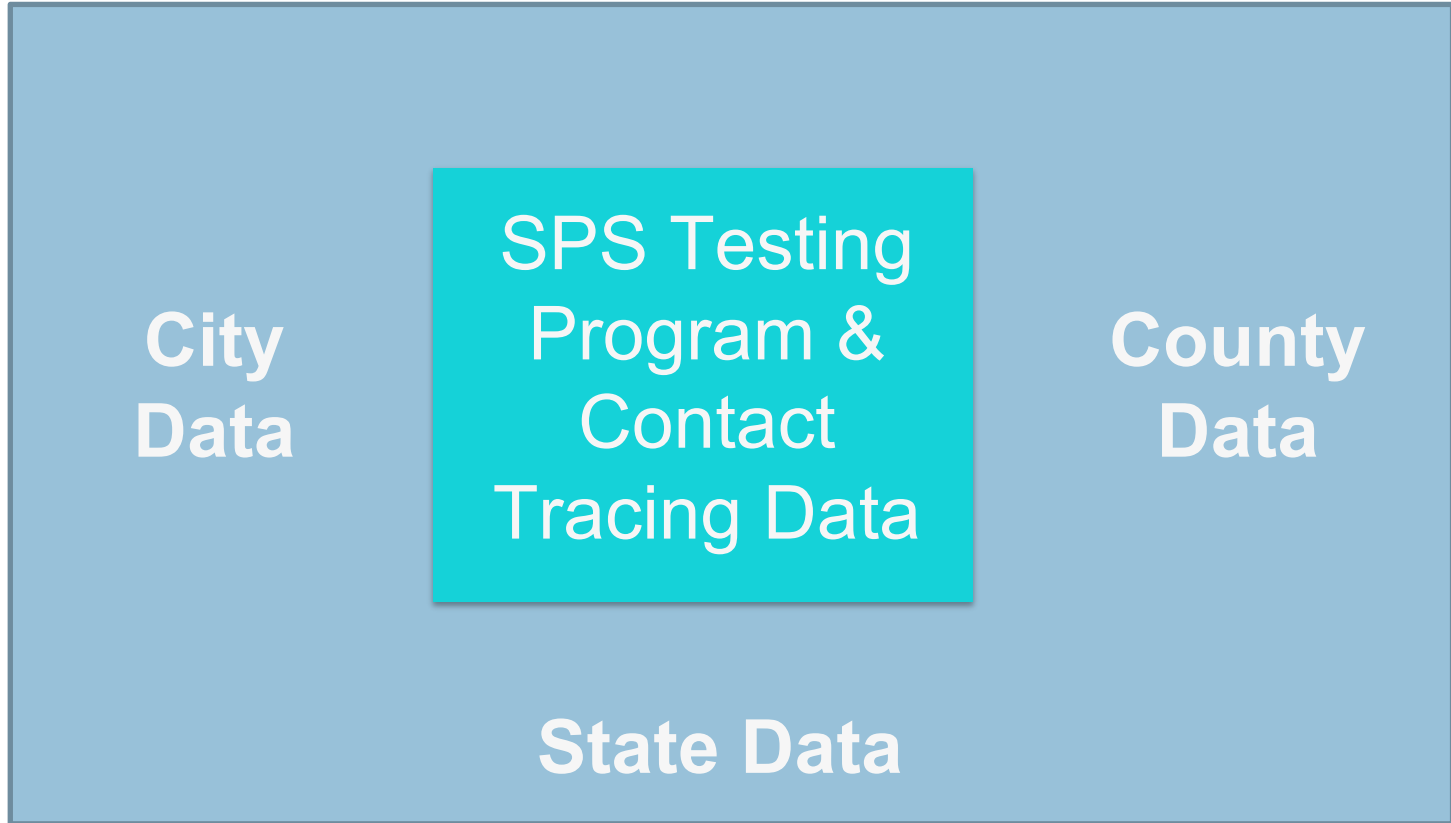
School Opening Advisory Group

Somerville Public Schools <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Jeff Curley, Chief of Staff• Obed Morales, ESCS Principal• Kenya Avant, Data Coordinator	School Committee <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dr. Sarah Phillips, Ward 3
COVID Incident Command System <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Omar Boukili, ICS Commander• Tim Snyder, ICS Deputy Commander• Doug Kress, HHS Director• Kristen Stelljes, Planning Chief• Brianna Noonan, Situation Lead• Amy Bantham, Contact Tracing & Testing Lead	Experts/Parents <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Gabrielle Jacquet- emergency physician with expertise in viral outbreaks• Daniele Lantange- environmental engineer and infectious disease expert

Communications around positive cases and closures

- ▶ Decisions around closing schools will be made on a classroom by classroom, cohort by cohort, or school by school basis, depending on the data collected in each school.
- ▶ SPS will be establishing a communications protocol to guide communications with families around positive cases once we are back in school.

Decisions will be based on SPS Data and informed by our broader context



Measure in-school transmission and quality of infection control regime

“Schools should use metrics of community spread as general points of information, not on-off switches for closure and opening, and should focus their own attention on developing ways to measure any in-school transmission and the quality of their infection control regime, in relation to the elements of infection control laid out below. For in-school transmission, the goal should be zero or near zero transmission.”

Harvard Path to Zero, December 18, 2020

Key role of baseline testing

- ▶ Baseline testing will let us know the prevalence in our staff and students.
- ▶ Positive individuals identified through baseline testing will receive guidance on isolation protocols and be contacted by our contact tracing team.

Indicators for Decision Making

SPS Indicators: Transmission Prevention & Operational

- ▶ ASHRAE risk score for school buildings
- ▶ % of staff available to support in-person learning (disaggregated by instructional and support staff)
- ▶ % of test results returned within 24 hours
- ▶ % of classrooms returned to remote learning

SPS Indicators: CDC Mitigation Measures

- ▶ % of schools reporting high compliance with mask wearing
- ▶ % of schools reporting high compliance with social distancing requirements
- ▶ % of schools reporting high compliance with hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette
- ▶ % of schools in compliance with school cleaning and disinfection protocols

SPS + City Indicators: Contact Tracing

- ▶ % contacts reached within 48 hours
- ▶ % household contacts completing individualized testing plan
- ▶ % community contacts completing individualized testing plan
- ▶ # cases identified as coming from an SPS source

% indicators will be disaggregated by community and SPS contacts

Measuring Compliance with Mitigation Measures

- ▶ Teachers and administrators will be asked to report on compliance for:
 - ▶ Mask usage
 - ▶ Social distancing
 - ▶ Hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette.
- ▶ DPW will be asked to report on compliance with cleaning and disinfection protocols based on supervision of custodial staff.
- ▶ HHS contact tracing team will report on the capacity and quality of the contact tracing operation.

SPS Indicators: Health

- ▶ Weekly case counts (disaggregated by school and cohort)
- ▶ SPS % positivity (individual tests)

City/County/State Indicators

- ▶ Average daily incidence per 100,000 (14 day)
- ▶ % positivity (with higher education testing)
- ▶ % positivity (without higher education testing)

Somerville Indicators

- ▶ 14 day moving average of new cases
- ▶ # of Somerville community members tested in last complete week

How indicators will be used

- ▶ These indicators help us assess and understand the risk of transmission we are facing across SPS and the community, they are not and cannot be thresholds that individually would trigger a closure.
- ▶ Decision making about closures will be dynamic and will factor in what is happening across all indicators with, ultimately much greater weight given to SPS-specific indicators, to balance provision of in-person learning and the wellbeing of our students and staff.
- ▶ As long as we are able to effectively test, isolate, and trace, we believe we will be able to keep the schools open to in-person learning.

Why aren't we setting thresholds?

- ▶ COVID data needs to be understood in context- one individual number does not tell us what is safe or not.
- ▶ City/county/state level indicators should inform our decision making, but are not a reliable proxy for what is happening in the school community.
- ▶ Other cities have set community level thresholds and then had to close their schools even though school level indicators were much lower than community indicators.

What dynamics influence community indicators?

- ▶ Who is getting tested?
 - ▶ People who are symptomatic v. people who want to travel
- ▶ How many tests are being administered?
 - ▶ Large scale screening programs, availability of reagent and swabs
- ▶ How mobile are people in the community?
 - ▶ Reopening phase
- ▶ What is the trend of the data and the pace of change?
 - ▶ Are numbers going up or down? How quickly are numbers growing or declining?

No established scientific basis for thresholds

“To me it’s a pretty arbitrary decision to choose a cutoff point whether it’s 2%, 5% or 10%. While it’s known that a higher rate of infection is worse, there haven’t been any studies showing at what point it gets to be too dangerous to keep schools open. I don’t know how you make a choice of a particular percentage. I don’t know how you base that on science. I don’t think we have the data to say that 5% is the right figure or 3% is the right figure.”

Dr. Art Reingold, professor of epidemiology, UC Berkeley School of Public Health

In “Why some schools close as COVID-19 cases rise when others say open.” Wall Street Journal, November 19, 2020

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/why-some-schools-close-as-covid-19-cases-rise-when-others-stay-open-11605789414>

Understanding context and how the data points inform each other leads to the best result

- ▶ Making decisions through the SPS Opening Advisory Group will allow us to make decisions through a robust understanding of the data.
- ▶ This process will allow us to find the best balance we can between making in-person learning available and keeping staff and students safe.

Questions?