



Somerville Public Schools

Education • Inspiration • Excellence

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Dear SPS Parents and Guardians,

As a reminder, in partnership with the City we are hosting our next Schools Reopening Town Hall meetings on Tuesday, January 26th. The Staff Town Hall is from 5-6, followed by a community-wide Town Hall from 6:30-8:00. The sessions will also be recorded and made available for viewing at a later time. For information on how to participate in the community town hall event, which starts at 6:30pm on Tuesday, visit www.somervillema.gov/virtualtownhall.

While we are still actively negotiating with the union on our reopening plan, we intend to provide a building update and proposed reopening timeline at the Tuesday Town Hall event, as well as information on current ongoing Covid-19 testing and expansion of our testing sites.

Starting February 1st, educators working with students with special education needs in the highest need programs will be able to provide limited in-person programming and support on a voluntary basis. City health officials have deemed the indoor proposal safe given the limited time inside (up to 2 hours) and the limited number of students, and given the success of the indoor/outdoor Community Schools afterschool pilot program. Some of these special education staff members have been providing in-person programming and support outdoors, and this effort allows for support to continue safely indoors during the cold winter months. Families of students eligible for the limited in-person programming will be contacted.

As with the afterschool indoor/outdoor pilot, barring an approved medical exemption, all students and staff participating in the program will be required to baseline test for Covid-19 prior to any indoor programming. They will also be required to participate in weekly Covid-19 testing. In addition, students must have current vaccination and health records on file with the school nurse in order to be able to participate in this programming. All other existing health and safety protocols will continue to be in place including the use of facemasks, frequent handwashing, and physical distancing.

The Community Schools limited indoor/outdoor afterschool pilot, which is also limited to 1-2 hours indoors in large open spaces, has allowed us to expand our testing capacity and testing sites. The program and Covid testing is successfully running at the Argenziano, Capuano, East Somerville, and Winter Hill and will continue to expand to other schools as our Covid-19 testing capacity expands. We appreciate the support of the Somerville Department of Health and Human Services, DPW, Parks and Recreation, Cataldo, and Tufts in helping us successfully launch these efforts as we continue to plan for the reopening of our schools.

Have a safe and restful weekend.

Respectfully,

Mary Skipper, Superintendent