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Dear SPS Parents and Guardians,

We want to provide an update of information presented at Tuesday night's Schools Reopening Town Hall event. Thank you to all of you who attended. We realize that the Town Hall events mean time away from your families and home obligations, and our hope is that those who prefer to hear information in that format find them to be a helpful resource. If you did not have an opportunity to attend the Town Hall, you can access the slides and a recording of the event at www.somervillema.gov/virtualtownhall.

The city's Department of Infrastructure and Asset Management (IAM) is continuing to work closely with building contractors to ensure that the ventilation and filtration work on school buildings continues to move forward as scheduled. Contractors encountered unexpected issues at some of the buildings that the city is working to resolve as quickly as possible so that contractors can finalize their work. A new projected building work timeline was presented on Tuesday. Assuming there are no further unexpected delays in the building mitigation work and the building work completion timeline presented on Tuesday holds true, we anticipate that we can begin transitioning students to an in-person model of instruction starting early March. As we mentioned in our last update, we are also still actively negotiating with the Somerville Educators Union on our reopening plan. We have finalized agreements with our other unions and will continue to work with the SEU on coming to a mutual agreement on reopening plans.

As a reminder, we would phase in students gradually with students in our highest needs special education programs the first to transition to in-person instruction. The list below shows a breakdown of our priority student populations and how they would be phased in. Other groups would be phased in as buildings become available. In order to meet the 6-foot distancing requirement, most students have been placed into one of two cohorts (A or B) that will determine which days they are receiving in-person instruction in a school building and which days they would be learning remotely. Students in Cohort A would physically be in schools on Mondays and Tuesdays and learning remotely W-F. Students in Cohort B would physically be in on Thursdays and Fridays and learning remotely M-W. Students in our highest needs programs will be receiving in-person instruction 4 days a week, as noted below. Wednesdays will be remote learning days for all students. Remote learning days will include synchronous (live online) instruction as well as asynchronous (independent) work.

- Phase 2A – **4 in-person days a week**: Special Education Highest Needs Programs – AIM, SHIP, SKIP, Lifeskills lower grades, and Healey Multi-graded grades 1-2
- Phase 2B in multiple stages:
 - **4 in-person days a week**: Remaining Special Education High Needs – ECIP, Life Skills grades 3-12, Transition, Multi-graded grades 3-8, SEEK, ELL Levels 1 & 2 SEI
 - Hybrid A/B Cohorts – **2 in-person days a week/3 days remote**: Next Wave/Full Circle, Grades 9-12 Resource Room and ASD Learning Lab
 - Hybrid A/B Cohorts – **2 in-person days a week/3 days remote**: CTE Seniors, SHS Redirect Learning Lab
- Phase 3A – Hybrid A/B Cohorts – **2 in-person days a week/3 days remote**: Pre-K and Kindergarten

Starting Monday, February 1st, educators working with students in the highest needs special education programs will be able to provide limited in-person programming and support indoors 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 voluntarily 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 this limited in-person programming are being contacted this week.

As with the afterschool indoor/outdoor pilot, barring an approved medical exemption, all students and staff participating in the program are required to baseline test for Covid-19 prior to any indoor programming. They will also be required to participate in weekly Covid-19 testing, and 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 indoor/outdoor afterschool pilot is also limited to 1-2 hours indoors in large open spaces. The program and the accompanying Covid-19 testing is now running successfully at the Argenziano, Capuano, East Somerville, and Winter Hill Schools. Healey and Kennedy programming is scheduled to start next week, followed by West Somerville and Brown School by mid-February.

Thank you again for all you continue to do to support Somerville students.

Respectfully,

Mary Skipper, Superintendent