

Maintaining Safety of Students, Teachers, Staff, and Families

1. Will testing surveillance be pooled at any point? [Click to listen to response](#)
2. How often do you intend to test the youngest students given that the test can be unpleasant and there is evidence that they do not spread the virus? [Click to listen to response](#)
3. Specifically what types of masks and face coverings will be provided to nurses, teachers and staff, and students? Will n95 or better filtration be provided for any staff or students?

Masks that meet Board of Health health and safety guidelines will be made available for students and staff.

4. Will all students and staff be tested before school starts if in person?

The district's back-to-school model involves a layered approach to student and staff safety including mandatory facial coverings, enhanced sanitation, reinforced hygiene, physical distancing, isolation rooms and environmental controls. These steps are necessary to provide a safe school reopening. In addition, we are working on adopting a protocol to provide students and staff with readily accessible Covid-19 testing on a routine basis as part of this layered approach to safety.

5. How will school nurses be supported? Will space be reconfigured to allow for a (presumably larger) number of students to be separated while awaiting treatment/parent pickup?

The Somerville Department of Public Health offers guidance regarding considerations, strategies, and rationale for making public health decisions. Their guidance provides school nurses and school staff with resources to implement effective prevention strategies.

Working with school administrators, school nurses will continue to use Standard and Transmission-Based Precautions when caring for sick people. The district has identified isolation rooms at each school to separate anyone who exhibits Covid-like symptoms.

Students that present Covid-19 symptoms while at school will be separated into a medical waiting room. A medical waiting room located near an entrance/exit to the building will be designated at each school site and will be separate from the nurse's office to prevent other students visiting the nurse from coming in contact with the student presenting Covid-19 symptoms. Parents/caretakers will be notified and the student will remain in the medical waiting room where they will be

monitored by a designated staff member until a parent/caretaker is able to pick them up. Staff monitoring the student and parents/guardians picking up the student will maintain a 6-foot distance and wear appropriate personal protective equipment. Students will not be allowed to ride the bus home.

6. Many parents of students with disabilities (especially younger children like mine) wonder if their children can be safe at school given their disability (behavior issues, putting things in their mouth, struggling to keep a mask on). At the same time these children have often regressed the most and would benefit from in-person services. Who should parents contact to discuss this decision?

Please contact Special Education Director Christine Trevisone (ctrevisone@k12.somerville.ma.us) or Assistant Director Marilyn Vrontas (mvroutas@k12.somerville.ma.us) with any questions regarding students with special needs.

Teacher Training and Support

1. It seems like much attention has been focused over the summer on how to reopen. What has been done to establish successful remote schooling? What training have teachers received on remote instruction? What can we expect to see offered remotely for our students? What assurances can you give parents that the fall will look any different/better than the spring? [Click link to listen to response](#)
2. What professional development has been provided to teachers so that they can provide remote online learning rather than emergency learning like we saw this spring? Zoom training, etc? [Click link to listen to response.](#)
3. What assurances can you give us that all teachers will proceed with the flexibility and adaptability that this crisis really needs? [Click link to listen to response](#)
4. What steps are being taken to make sure that teachers have what they need for remote instruction and that the district has made enough investment when it comes to software, technical staff, and teaching strategies for remote education? The experience that my child had in the spring was disappointing when compared to other districts including Boston Public Schools. [Click link to listen to response](#)
5. Teaching our youngest children virtually in the spring was a complete failure. And to be fair to the teachers in the spring, remote learning for our youngest children doesn't even seem possible. Can the district offer any specifics about how they intend to improve the effectiveness of virtual learning for our youngest children? [Click to listen to response](#)

6. At the last Town Hall you had mentioned that PD sessions were available to the teachers during the spring and summer months. Are they required of the teachers? Do you feel that the teachers will be prepared for more effective remote learning in the fall? [Click to listen to response](#)
7. If Somerville decides on the hybrid model, what's the plan for teachers who are parents of young children? They cannot teach every day if they also have young children they need to take care of at home. Does Somerville have enough subs on standby? [Click link to listen to response](#)
8. Given we are certain to have some component of remote learning, what policies are being put in place to ensure that a) teachers are supported in providing high quality, engaging remote learning, and b) that teachers are accountable to provide effective remote learning.

Remote and in-person models have strengths, weaknesses, and limitations. Our hope is to capitalize on the strengths and as possible mitigate the weaknesses. Through all models of learning we are guided by our drive to create an engaging and positive learning environment that supports the development of our students - academically developing the mind, physically developing the body, and engaging students through the social lens.

Regardless of the learning model, the Somerville Public Schools will continue to implement our existing curriculum in alignment to the Massachusetts curriculum frameworks. Curriculum programs may be adapted to meet changing conditions and arising student needs. This includes the addition of skill development, including those needed to engage in adjusted learning models, and the incorporation of foundational curriculum lost as a result of disrupted instruction during the Spring 2020 semester. Incorporating social emotional learning into the instructional day will also be an important component of the learning experience, as will providing opportunities for students to engage in safe social interaction and enrichment through partnerships with Community Schools, Somerville's Parks and Recreation, Citizen Schools, Enroot, and others. To read more about SPS's Plan for a [High-Quality, Comprehensive Learning Experience](#), click on the link. To learn more about Somerville's [Professional Learning plan](#), click on the link.

9. Are teachers getting access to Educational Technologists and Instructional Designers?

To read about the [Instructional Education Technology Support and Professional Learning](#) being deployed to assist teachers teach remotely, please click on the link.

9-12 Curriculum, Remote Education

1. Will there be any opportunities for incoming high school students to meet outdoors, safely with social distancing, for orientation activities, to get to know one another as a class? [Click to listen to response](#)
2. Is it possible that some classes at the high school will be canceled? [Click to listen to response](#)
3. When will students learn their course schedule/offerings? How many courses have been cancelled? [Click to listen to response](#)
4. Will student attendance for HS students be required? [Click to listen to response](#)
5. What is the plan for the high school and middle school students where there are multiple subjects and teachers? Also there are many classes which can't be done remotely, how will that be handled? I have a freshman entering high school and am also wondering how the fall sports season will be handled?

School Principals and teachers will be working to coordinate and develop appropriate schedules based on students' grade levels. Schedules will be sent out to families after classroom assignments have been made and prior to the start of the school year, detailing what the school day will look like based on the regular full school day hours. Every effort will be made to make necessary adjustments to content delivery in a virtual setting to keep students actively engaged. Part of the planning process will entail exploring creative virtual resources and strategies. Updates on sports seasons will be posted at: www.somerville.k12.ma.us/athletics.

6. Is the school considering recorded lectures? That would allow parents who need to work to play the class when they can.

We will provide a combination of synchronous and asynchronous instruction. Some of the instruction may be in the form of a recorded lesson, however, we feel it is important to regularly connect with students directly online as part of the relationship-building process, to provide students with regular and consistent feedback, and to keep students engaged in their learning. Students are expected to attend and engage in all synchronous and asynchronous activities designed by their teachers for the full school day.

K-8 Curriculum and Remote Education

1. Are schools considering having Kindergarten students attend school in-person full time due to the children's young age? [Click link to listen to response.](#)

2. Are there any plans to use age-based cohorting, similar to Cambridge? The evidence suggests children under 10 are less susceptible and transmit less. Early grades instruction is more difficult to convey remotely. Early learning loss carries long term harm. One workable solution would be to have English language learners, special needs students, and younger students back full time, with middle/high school remote. If all children are part-time, those students will have many more contacts, as parents will be forced to find off-days childcare. If some students are remote and some are full time, the full time students have fewer adult contacts as they are only home and in school. This also requires fewer in-person educators. [Click link to listen to response](#)
3. How are you planning to address "summer learning loss"? Why have teachers/schools not sent out summer assignments, such as the traditional book lists and summer reading assignments? Will teachers be giving the students any ramp-up work, during the two weeks that you will delay the start of school? [Click link to listen to response](#)
4. What is the plan for Chromebooks? If we don't have one, but have the means to buy it ourselves, should we do so? [Click link to listen to response](#)
5. Will there be remote learning recommendations for students in terms of hardware/software requirements, and, training/tutorials and baseline skill expectations (esp for younger learners)? [Click link to listen to response](#)
6. Will the Somerville Schools be overseeing the all-virtual curriculum/content, if that content is managed by the state? We love our Somerville school system, trust you all, and are curious if you'll be able to ensure all virtual content is up to our typical quality. [Click link to listen to response](#)
7. Superintendent Skipper said that remote instruction will look very different from how it looked in the spring. What would remote instruction look like in the fall? How many hours of synchronous instruction? How will you move students through a grade-appropriate curriculum? [Click link to listen to response](#)
8. When will parents find out what the remote learning platforms will be? Will there be consistency between (elementary) schools, or at least between multiple classes in one school at the same grade level? [Click link to listen to response](#)
9. What is the plan for music instruction for the fall? In the spring there were some fun activities for younger kids, but band and string instructions were lacking a lot as was actual singing. [Click link to listen to response](#)
10. Independent work for lower grades - how much parental involvement is expected? [Click to listen to response](#)

11. So parents have to be working at home in order to take them to these outdoor activities at the end of the school day? [Click to listen to response](#)
12. In considering scheduling changes you mentioned for remote learning, can you be more specific on what this might mean for families? For example, are you planning to integrate synchronous class time with synchronous specialist time so for students/families these will happen in a coherent and streamlined way? [Click to listen to response](#)
13. It was said that 10 days out of the year will be used for training (I assume above and beyond the usual half Wednesdays.) two related questions: 1.) What's the focus of the training? 2.) What's the schedule for that and are the days going to be front-loaded to occur in the fall or will they be spread out through the year?

On July 27, the MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education announced that school districts will have 10 additional days at the start of the 2020-2021 school year to prepare for the reopening of schools. SPS will add these 10 days to the 2 days already calendared for opening preparation. The first day of school for students in grades 1-12 will be September 18th. The first day of school for Pre-K and Kindergarten students is September 25th.

During these 12 days, district staff will participate in professional development, curriculum planning, and collaboration, as well as training on health, safety, and sanitation protocols. Time will allow for family outreach and engagement and the preparation of classrooms, school buildings, and outdoor spaces for a time when in-person learning can occur.

14. Has there been thought on how to ensure siblings, in the hybrid model, are on the same in person / remote schedule? [Click to listen to a response to a similar question](#)
15. You mentioned "offering" professional development (PD) in August around remote learning. Is it mandatory?

Our contractual agreement includes some required professional development offered by the district as well as opportunities for educators to select from a menu of PD sessions that align with the school's or district's priorities.

16. Can you talk a little bit more about what "taking attendance" means? One of the big challenges we had last spring with my kindergartener (now first grader) was that he would just not be interested in what was going on and would quit Zoom. If I am on a call or trying to work, I can't then redirect him to focus again on school. It seems impossible to both work and constantly monitor my child to make sure he is actually paying attention to what is happening with school. [Click to listen to response](#)

17. For remote learning going forward, will student attendance be required? This past spring, my child was often the only child (especially by the end of the quarter) attending classes, and it didn't give her much motivation to attend as well.

After the spring semester, it became clear that students benefit from having clear expectations about attendance, and how assessment and grading will be done. In the synchronous remote educational model, daily attendance will be taken by teachers in each class. The state will be monitoring daily attendance, even for schools starting in a remote model, and so SPS will take attendance as they normally do when kids are learning in-person.

18. How will absences be counted? If a student doesn't feel up to going in on a day they are supposed to, but does remote learning on that day - do you have a plan for counting absences?

All Somerville Public Schools (SPS) students are expected to attend and engage in all synchronous and asynchronous activities designed by their teachers for the full school day. Attendance will be taken daily. You can learn more about Attendance Requirements during Remote Learning [here](#).

19. Experiences varied from school to school. What work will be done to ensure a similar quality remote experience district wide? [Click to listen to response](#)

20. Can you consider expanded summer school options for 2021 to catch any students who fall behind?

We appreciate the suggestion. We hope that we will be able to expand summer school options for 2021, particularly to support students who may have fallen behind, and will work with our many community partners to identify ways in which we might be able to expand our programming.

21. Have you considered using older students as tutoring or classroom supports for younger students (as internship, community service, paid work, or course credit)?

Thank you for that suggestion. As part of our redesign work at Somerville High School, we are exploring ways to provide students with beyond-the-classroom learning experiences including internships, community service, and paid work. This is certainly a suggestion that we will explore throughout the year.

22. What are plans for the CTE students at the high school? This population of students truly suffered during remote learning in the spring. The lack of class time and hands on experiences are hindering the progress of skills that will be needed when they enter the workforce.

While we understand that Career and Technical Education will be a different experience in a remote setting, we are putting plans into place to continue to make it a rich and valuable experience. Plans include:

- *integrating multiple digital learning opportunities and platforms and in some cases, hands-on learning platforms to create a blended learning class experience;*
- *incorporating engaging video lessons that resemble real world experiences and CTE shop lessons;*
- *providing consistent feedback from shop instructors to parents and students on a biweekly basis to communicate progress and ensure that CTE requirements are completed; and*
- *providing reliable supports.*
 - *CTE counselors will be available daily for all CTE students and faculty.*
 - *Students will have access to all other regular support services.*
 - *A CTE Co-op Coordinator will support student placement in all co-ops and internships..*

Additionally, we are proud and excited to showcase the CTE programs. Throughout the week, a Social Media Coordinator will highlight each program on the CTE Facebook and Twitter accounts.

23. Will students be graded on remote work? Will they be penalized if they're not able to do the work, either for logistical reasons or because remote learning is a bad fit? Will students be held back? Will parents be held legally responsible if students signed up for the remote option don't engage in it?

Accountability for learning is important and the optional nature of work during the spring closure was noted as a challenge for many students, staff, and families. It is important to remember that the focus of much of the work in the spring was to facilitate student engagement, support them emotionally, and to provide maximum flexibility for families and staff during a stressful and uncertain time.

As curriculum and instruction is modified for the upcoming school year, SPS is considering the skills and content to be assessed. Those standards are being identified now by teams of curriculum leaders and educators and will drive what we report out on and inform any adjustments we need to make to report cards. Students at all grade levels will receive traditional grades beginning in September 2020. We plan to resume use of our elementary standards based report card for the 2020-2021 school year, with the likelihood of minor adjustments to reflect any curriculum changes. Students in grades 6-8 will use the traditional A, B, C, D & F system, with an "NA" option which teachers can use if their student has a known

barrier that prevents them from completing assignments and attending synchronous classes.

A key element in the process will be more consistency and continuity across grade spans and across schools at the same level. Families can expect to see common expectations and structures in the nature of assignments, length of assignments, feedback tools and executive functioning support for all students. With guidance from the state, we will be determining what the appropriate mechanisms are for grading (letter grades, standards-based, Pass/Fail, Credit/No Credit) for students participating in the SPS Full Remote Learning Model.

24. This one might be crazy, but for K-2/3 students/teachers, would you consider keeping students with last year's teacher (even if at a different school at this point) for 100% remote since kids made a connection with those teachers and young kids won't be able to make a connection with new teachers remotely?

Stability is important for creating a learning environment where students can grow, explore, and form relationships. Teachers and administrators are working to ensure that students feel safe as they advance to the next grade to meet their new instructor and peers. To promote relationship building, SPS will provide time early in the year to allow for educators to reach out--be it in virtual or in-person, safe outdoor spaces--to meet directly with families to begin building relationships and connections beyond the screen. In conjunction with educators, creating and sharing resources to help educators build strong classroom communities and explicitly teach and embed social emotional learning skills in the first few weeks of school. This involves valuing and celebrating student identities and perspectives in order to make them feel welcome and engaged in this new learning environment. The district has adopted [Second Step](#) as its primary social emotional learning curriculum in grades preK-8 and will continue to utilize this evidence-based curriculum to help students develop the social-emotional skills they need to succeed as they build a strong foundation for lifelong learning.

25. What advice do you have for parents whose kids just won't do remote learning? It's like pulling teeth and causes stress, tension, and arguments.

Parents who are worried about their student's progress should communicate their concerns with teachers early so that they can develop a coordinated strategy to remove barriers to students' education. If your student struggled with remote learning during the Spring semester, please let their teacher know at the beginning of the year to allow responsive and timely support to be put in place. For more information on SPS's [Plan for a High-Quality, Comprehensive Learning Experience](#), please click on the link.

Academic Testing and Evaluations

1. I know that the MTA is advocating for suspending MCAS for the year. This maps back to standards. How are we expected to keep the same standards and expectations of our students and teachers when we are operating/learning in an entirely different way? Does Somerville have a position on this? [Click link to listen to response](#)

Asynchronous Full Remote Questions

1. If families choose the fully-asynchronous curriculum option, will they still keep their child's assignment in their school for when the schools start reopening? Or do you have to redo the lottery? [Click to listen to response](#)
2. Even if it is determined that students can return to in-person learning in schools, will there remain an option to keep some children fully remote for the entire fall or whole year? [Click to listen to response](#)
3. I am interested to understand if students/families that initially opt for fully remote instruction (due to family risk) will have their classroom spot protected if later in the year it is safe for them to join the classroom. [Click link to listen to response](#)
4. If a family opts into the Full Remote Learning Model, how long does that apply? The whole year? Will families be able to switch from fully remote to hybrid when ready?

Families will have the option to transition to the Hybrid Learning Model on a quarterly basis, based on the [2020-2021 School Year Calendar](#).

5. Even if there is fully remote learning, can families have the opportunity to meet with their new teachers one-on-one in a socially distanced way so teachers aren't just a face on the screen? [Click link to listen to response to similar question](#)

Hybrid In-Person Instruction

1. If you decide on a hybrid model would you work with families with children who have medical needs who would prefer a complete virtual approach at first? [Click link to listen to response](#)
2. In a hybrid model, will siblings be placed on the same days so that parents can work? [Click link to listen to response](#)
3. Can you speak to what the hybrid options you're considering actually look like? Have you ruled any options out? Any information you could provide would be helpful as families with two working parents try to plan the care we will need. [Click link to listen to response](#)
4. It was mentioned that young students, ELL, and special needs students will have the hardest time with remote learning. Is there any consideration to bringing those students

back full time or more often (like Cambridge is considering) in a hybrid model? [Click link to listen to response](#)

5. Could you talk more about the outdoor learning options you mentioned at the end - will they be organized by the cohort students will be in when they (eventually, hopefully) move to hybrid? Will they be available to all students or certain priority student groups? Will they start in September? [Click to listen to response](#)
6. If we return to hybrid in-person education, what is the plan for recess and before school play time that kids love as well as social time during the lunch time/ snack time?

During in-person education, students will have opportunities to reinforce the skills learned in the classroom and build community during recess and unstructured play. For student safety, each classroom will be assigned a dedicated set of outdoor play materials that can be used during recess.

Breakfast and lunch will be served in classrooms. Meals provided by SPS Food and Nutrition Services will be individually wrapped and delivered in insulated travel bags. Reported student allergies will be noted and meals will be planned accordingly. Designated areas where students can eat and still maintain the required minimum 6-foot distancing will be identified at each school and will vary by school. Some school buildings have alcoves, large hallways, gymnasiums, or other large open spaces that might be used. Wherever and whenever possible (weather and space permitting), students may also go outside to eat.

7. I have one child in Somerville Public Schools, and one high-needs student in another school. Can SPS match the in-person schedule for my Somerville public school child to my out-of-district student?

The district will make every attempt to match up siblings in different grade levels and programs. Parents and caregivers who have students in outside programs should notify the district of sibling schedules as soon as possible so that schools can plan accordingly.

Social Emotional Support

1. Our children are suffering deeply from social isolation, particularly young children who cannot effectively communicate with their friends through technology. Can the district provide a specific idea of how they intend to address our children's social and emotional development and well being through a fully remote model? [Click to listen to response](#)
2. In what way is the district amending curriculum to reflect the repeatedly stated emphasis on the students' social-emotional well being? What content are you going to teach differently, or additionally? [Click to listen to response](#)

3. How can you younger kids connect with strangers to deal with socio-emotional issues? [Click to listen to response](#)
4. Tell us about the ways in which you intend to facilitate students' social emotional learning, and to embed culturally responsive teaching practices, during remote or hybrid learning. [Click link to listen to response](#)

Support for Parents and Families

1. For younger kids, is there thinking about how to minimize parental oversight if there's more scheduling and live teaching? [Click to listen to response](#)
2. Are there childcare options for school-aged kids whose parents can't be home every day because they are essential employees? [Click to listen to response](#)
3. Will there be training for students and families for the remote learning aspects, in addition to training for teachers? [Click link to listen to response](#)
4. Building community, how much family service will there be offered to parents? [Click link to listen to response](#)
5. One major function that the schools offer is childcare while parents work. Is the city considering options to offer childcare for families that need it outside of the school time? This seems particularly critical with a hybrid or fully remote model. [Click link to listen to response](#)
6. Can parents volunteer to transport other people's kids to school, and have SPS coordinate that? [Click link to listen to response](#)
7. If parents have availability, how can we be a help to the district? [Click link to listen to response](#)
8. Are there any vehicles for donating to the various efforts providing food / remote learning access to district families who need it?

Thank you. We appreciate any donations to support these efforts. Donations can be made by completing our online [SPS Donation Form](#). The City of Somerville has also set up a comprehensive website for residents interested in making donations to support individuals and families in the community. You can visit the [COVID-19 Help: How to Donate and Volunteer](#) webpage by clicking on the link.

Health Metrics, Decision Making, and Community Health

1. Who is making the decision about reopening? Is it a vote of the school committee? What say does the governor have? [Click link to listen to response](#)

2. What is the approximate timeline for decision making for reopening schools/plan for fall 2021? Who exactly has the final decision versus input rights? [Click link to listen to response](#)
3. Has the state or city health departments determined when it will be safe to go back to school, based on testing availability and current virus transmission levels? What specific data points are being looked at and what are the levels we need to meet to allow in-person schooling? I know additional measures (social distancing, mask wearing, HVAC systems requirements, etc., a zillion logistical changes) also need to be met. [Click link to listen to response](#)
4. Are you considering a different approach for children under-10 and 10-and-over given all the evidence that those under-10 don't spread covid-19 as much and are least likely to successfully learn remotely? [Click link to listen to response](#)
5. I understand that there are risks to reopening schools, which have been greatly discussed for adults, but there are also risks to keeping schools indefinitely closed. Online learning simply does not work as well as in-person learning -- particularly for very young and vulnerable students. How is the city weighing the health and safety interests of students and parents, in addition to teachers and staff? [Click link to listen to response](#)
6. Has it been decided what thresholds in the community caseload (second wave or otherwise) will trigger a transition to fully remote? [Click link to listen to response](#)
7. It is troubling and confusing that the city considers only PK-2 as the youngest learners who must be prioritized. Are you aware that the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Mathematics—a national, independent panel of scientific experts—recommends prioritizing in-person instruction for grades K-5? [Click link to listen to response](#)
8. Can you please speak to the way that healthcare experts and scientists are playing as advisors to the School District (and city) around re-opening? How can the doctors and epidemiologists in our community support this work? [Click link to listen to response](#)
9. Is there any benchmark for a full return to school for all students? Is it a vaccine? [Click link to listen to response](#)
10. What are the metrics being used to determine when in-person is possible for any at risk cohort? [Click to listen to response](#)
11. Given that a vaccine is not a given, what happens if there isn't one? Are you and the STA planning for that? [Click to listen to response](#)

12. When do you expect the health department will have numbers for the metrics they're developing to govern reopening— e.g., what new cases/100,000 will you use as a threshold? [Click to listen to response](#)
13. Can you explain why we have differed from so many other towns: Brookline for example has confirmed in person 5 days for youngest and special needs. [Click to listen to response](#)
14. If cases remain low, what is the timeline for implementing the fixes needed to progress to the hybrid? [Click to listen to response](#)
15. Multiple preschools are already up and running with great success within the city under EEC guidelines (similar or more stringent than DESE). Will the Capuano and SMILE look to these programs for inspiration and guidance? [Click link to listen to response](#)
16. Have you done any epidemiological modeling (or worked with local universities to request it) to inform your decisions about the fall?

The Somerville public Schools Fall 2020 Reopening Plan has been informed by guidance from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, guidance from the Somerville Department of Health and Human Services, expert epidemiologists and immunologists, and student, family and staff input that we have solicited over the last several months through surveys, Town Halls, public comment, and personal outreach.

Under the guidance of Somerville's Board of Health, the city of Somerville is developing a comprehensive virus surveillance testing plan for all students and staff that will facilitate a safe re-entry to schools. Reflecting Somerville's citywide approach, several key health parameters are being considered in the development of this testing plan, including but not limited to:

- *14-day average positive case rates per 100,000*
- *14-day average of the percentage of daily positive cases*
- *14-day average number of daily positive cases*
- *Testing and contact tracing capacity*
- *Evolving science and research*
- *Guidance of expert epidemiologists, virologists, and other health experts*

Other factors being considered in the development of an effective community monitoring and contact tracing plan are: establishing regular testing routines to ensure early identification of cases, developing regional partnerships to secure reliability and fast turnaround times on results, as well as establishing clear and consistent contact tracing protocols. Good progress is being made on the

development of this critical component of the reopening plan. Further details will be forthcoming once the plan is finalized.

Questions on Start of School Year and Reopening Safely

1. It sounds like there is a lot of planning to go back safely in-person in some form. Can you say more about the timeline and approach for phasing in students to the buildings? [Click link to listen to response](#)
2. Regarding the choice to keep our child home: when would we need to notify SPS about our decision? [Click list to listen to response](#)
3. What is the thinking on which students will attend in-person in the beginning, if any? Will parents choose, or will the district reserve in-person learning for the most vulnerable populations? [Click link to listen to response](#)
4. In the spring, Unidos teaching IN SPANISH was mostly dropped. There was some conversation but subject instruction using Spanish was rare. What's the plan for fully resuming the Unidos program this coming fall? [Click link to listen to response](#)
5. I'm sad to hear that we are starting remotely. Our numbers support reopening for vulnerable populations for whom the benefits outweigh the risks. What is the timeline for in-person return? It seems like there's no incentive or motivation to progress. [Click to listen to response](#)
6. Will you be prioritizing in-person outdoor, distanced meet and greets with their new teachers to help get the teacher student relationship off to a good start? [Click to listen to response](#)
7. When can we expect teacher and class assignments for the kids, and has a daily schedule of classes been determined like Boston has suggested. [Click to listen to response](#)
8. Do you have a sense when we will know teachers/class lists? If there is a way for families to help virtually, will our principals communicate those opportunities? [Click to listen to response](#)
9. Which student populations is the city and district looking to prioritize for return to in-person learning? [Click to listen to response to similar question](#)

SPS has identified priority groups to be the first to transition into in-person learning. Students in these groups will enter into a 4 day in-person learning mode (Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday) and engage in remote learning on Wednesdays. The priority groups will transition in the following order:

Phase 2a: Special education students with significant complex needs (as defined in the Special Education Section of this document)

Phase 2b: English Learners WIDA Levels 1 and 2

In Phase Two, where populations of students are engaging in in-person learning, if at any point, the risk is considered too high in regards to health and safety conditions, students will transition back to the all remote learning mode.

SPS has identified younger students, grades prek-2, as priority groups to be among the first to transition into Phased Hybrid learning. Students in these groups will transition into the 2 day in-person and 3 day remote component of the Phased Hybrid Learning Model. The priority groups will transition in the following order:

Phase 3a: Grades preKindergarten and Kindergarten

Phase 3b: Grades 1 and 2

In Phase Three, where populations of students are engaging in in-person learning, if at any point the risk is considered too high in regards to health and safety conditions, students will transition back to the all remote learning mode.

10. When will we learn the identity of the other students in our children's cohort? Will we be provided the contact information of their parents so we can make arrangements for when the children are not in school? [Click link to listen to response to similar question](#)

Logistics, Facilities, Budget, and Staffing

1. If Somerville decides on the hybrid model, what's the plan for teachers who are parents of young children? They cannot teach every day if they also have young children they need to take care of at home. Does Somerville have enough subs on standby? [Click link to listen to response](#)
2. In terms of space, have you considered using other municipal spaces that may not be currently used because of remote working? I think we have to be more creative about what school space really entails and work with the entire city to provide more spaces if what is designated at school space currently is limited. [Click link to listen to response](#)
3. If there are snow days, will days need to be made up? [Click link to listen to response](#)
4. In a previous email, Superintendent Skipper mentioned that they would be doing walkthroughs of school buildings with ventilation experts. Will the results of those walk-throughs be made public? If certain schools do not have safe conditions, do individual schools have the flexibility to be remote? [Click link to listen to response](#)

5. How do we find out the specifics of the ventilation of individual classrooms within specific schools as classroom ventilation is the difference between it being a safe space or not. And what are the specific plans for making classroom spaces safe given each classroom's specific ventilation systems. [Click link to listen to response](#)
6. In addition to securing technology for students (chromebooks/hotspots), has there been any discussion of bringing in more print solutions, such as textbooks/workbooks, and student work dropboxes? [Click to listen to response](#)
7. Some teachers in the spring offered work that could be printed at home so children had less time on a screen. What if you don't have a printer? Is there a place for the district to print copies that could be picked up by families? [Click to listen to response](#)
8. Are the ventilation issues surmountable. Apologies if this has already been answered, but is this a non-starter? Will the report be made publicly available? [Click to listen to response](#)
9. What's the plan for the winter when it may be too cold to open windows?

SPS has partnered with the Somerville Department of Infrastructure and Asset Management and acquired the services of Fitzemeyer & Tocci Associates, an engineering firm specializing in ventilation in the healthcare industry, to assess the safety of each of our school and district buildings. In assessing, we are considering the percent of particles the current filtering system allows, level of humidity control, access to windows/outside air, and the number of touch points in an area. The goal of the assessment is two-fold: to identify potential issues with the ventilation and filtration in each building, and to make recommendations on how best to mitigate these issues and identify what the cost and timeline for each fix will be.

10. Will Somerville pay for Zoom this year, which most teachers and many parents preferred for its ease of use of google meet?

Teachers will have access to a district Zoom account. Platforms most likely to be used this fall include Zoom, Google Classroom/Meet, Dojo, and Seesaw.

11. When is the new high school building expected to be completed, and what options are the alternatives until it's done?

Barring any additional construction delays, the new high school is expected to be ready for occupancy in December. After discussion on the preliminary evaluation from our consultant with our colleagues at Health and Human Services and the Department of Infrastructure and Asset Management, it is clear that it would not be possible to adequately retrofit the ventilation systems in the existing high school, portions of which date back to 1895, before the new high school is ready

for occupancy. Similarly, the preliminary review also indicates that it will not be possible to adequately retrofit the portion of the Edgerly building currently being used to house our CTE programs. Therefore, we have reached the difficult decision that Somerville High School students will need to stay in the All Remote phase of our Phased Hybrid Learning Model until the new high school building opens.

12. Is there consideration to move younger students from buildings that do not meet codes to other schools who may have more space if other students are learning remotely? e.g.: high school? High school trailers? [Click to listen to response to similar question](#)
13. Will every SPS student receive a Chromebook? If we don't have Chromebooks we have other laptops for the students in the household, do we need to get a Chromebook for compatibility for remote learning?

Yes. Ensuring access to devices will continue to be a top priority, with the goal of ensuring that every student has a dedicated and functioning Chromebook or Tablet to support remote learning for the 2020-21 school year.

We are using family surveys and direct outreach to identify students who need a dedicated device to use, and will continue to issue devices on loan prior to the start of the 2020-2021 school year. We distributed approximately 1,000 devices last Spring and secured additional devices over the summer. We also have Hotspots and Comcast subscriptions available for students and families who do not yet have reliable internet service.

Teacher's Union

1. What is the process and timeline of negotiation with the STA? [Click link to listen to response](#)
2. How is the school administration working with the teacher's union to find a plan they are comfortable with? [Click link to listen to response](#)
3. The STA has been very clear they want remote only and for an indefinite period of time. This would potentially consign our children to remote learning literally for YEARS. How will this be negotiated? [Click link to listen to response](#)

Equity and Inclusion

1. Vulnerable students are also suffering from consequences of school closures. Thanks to your hard work Somerville's numbers look great. A zero-risk environment will never exist. What more is needed to return vulnerable students to in-person learning? [Click link to listen to response](#)

2. Is it possible that some groups of higher needs students (e.g. ELL, younger grades, SPED, high-risk home situations, etc) may be on a more robust in-person schedule even if there is a hybrid model for other grade bands or peers? For example, some kids might attend in-person 4 days per week while others would only attend in-person 2 days per week. My guess is that there would be privacy and equity issues that would impact that possibility, but I know some other districts in the country are looking at bringing in some grade bands but not others and providing additional in-person support for ELL and SPED students. [Click link to listen to response](#)
3. Is anyone worried about gaps increasing as affluent parents just create pods and get teachers for their students while other parents can't do that? [Click to listen to response](#)
4. Will only students on IEPs designated as being "high needs" or who haven't been able to access remote learning be prioritized for in-person learning? What about children with disabilities who have been able to access remote learning to some degree? How does it work if they are in an inclusion setting? [Click on link to listen to response to similar question](#)

Wrap Around Support for Students and Wellness

1. I know not every district in the Commonwealth has decided (as of yet) to go fully remote but is there any word on the school lunch SNAP benefits being extended. [Click to listen to response](#)
2. How are you accommodating children with IEPs and mental health disorders such as Oppositional defiant disorder, ADHD, ADD? What services will be put into place to help them? Who is running the parks and recs for the social needs? [Click to listen to response](#)

Homeschooling and Other Educational Opportunities

1. As a parent of a Kindergartener and First grader, what if I just decide not to do any virtual programming due to work/financial needs and call it a year? What happens to my children? [Click to listen to response](#)
2. Many families in Somerville are forming pandemic pods - I loosely define a pod as a group of two or more families who break social distancing to meet in real life with each other, while maintaining social distancing outside the pod. The purpose of a pod may simply be to socialize the children and adults, or a pod may be formed for childcare, where adults watch each other's kids or share a nanny, or for educational purposes: some pods are hiring tutors or teachers. I worry pods may further inequity in the district. Does the district or city have any advice or guidance for those of us forming pods? I would personally like to form a pod with another family in my child's class. When will those class lists be available? [Click to listen to response](#)

3. Is there a fee for the Parks and Rec programs? Will it be coordinated with school lessons? [Click to listen to response](#)
4. For the outdoor recreational activities you are hoping to provide -- what do you expect will be possible from a capacity perspective. The rec department ran some really great outdoor camps this summer but they filled up really quickly. Do you expect to have more capacity in the programming you are planning? [Click to listen to response](#)
5. What happens to after school programming once we move into the hybrid model? Will they be running on a hybrid model of some kind as well? Wondering about El Sistema in particular, but also more generally. [Click to listen to response](#)
6. My child attends a private school in Somerville. Are they held to the same standards as far as what the Somerville Public Schools do?

Private schools in the state are still required to follow relevant state guidance, however, plans established by SPS and approved by the Somerville School Committee are applicable to the district's schools only.