



Flexible Route to Full Time: Schedule Changes for January 2021

December 9, 2020

Good morning,

At last night's board meeting I presented changes to the hybrid schedules. You can see that presentation here: [Flexible Route to Full Time](#). FairTV was not able to broadcast the meeting last night but it will be posted online at the [FairTV YouTube channel](#).

We continue to advance on our goal to bring back as many students for full-time, in-person learning, as we can safely. We need to increase our in-school learning time with students. We also need to continue to work towards the eventual return of all students to full time school. These changes will better balance our instruction and support for students, while providing a path to full-time.

Our pace for this work is driven by the need to keep safety as the highest priority as we also seek greater in-person learning opportunities for all students. In our planning, we worked with three pieces of information; the current forecast that the second wave will peak in January, with the work of other districts in successfully returning all K-5 students to school, and with our own experience managing mitigation strategies, positive cases and quarantines so far. The first parameter – the timing, and height, of the second wave – is the least predictable and it is beyond our control. We will continue to work with the state and town health departments in assessing and responding to this information.

We have carefully examined the challenges and opportunities at each level, recognizing how needs and risks vary between elementary and secondary. Therefore, we continue to address them separately.

Grades K-5: All students will attend 5 days/week from 8:55 am - 1:00 pm (Holland Hill 8:00 am - 12:05 pm), beginning Tuesday, January 19, based on the following considerations:

- The need to see K-5 students daily is great. Adding additional hours improves our ability to provide the full curriculum and better integrate the curricular areas together. In addition to extended in-person instruction, the schedule includes remote synchronous Specials and extension activities daily from 2:00 pm - 3:40 pm.

- The knowledge of what it takes to keep everyone safe. We have seen multiple local school districts bring all elementary students into the classroom safely.

Distancing in the classrooms, if all students attend, will be reduced to the minimum of 3 feet. The key is to support the reduced distance with increased vigilance on masks, the use of the desk barriers, and in particular, having the adults maintain awareness of their contact time of 15 minutes within 6 feet of children.

- K-5 lunch is not included in the new schedule as it presents too many logistical challenges to be done safely at this time. There will be a scheduled snack using desk barriers and/or alternate spaces, as available. Grab-and-Go lunches will still be available at dismissal.
- Parents may opt for their child to full remote into their current K-5 class. You must call or email your child's school by December 19 if you intend to choose full remote instruction. There is no survey or form to complete. You may return from remote to in-person with three days' notice and your child's place in their class is guaranteed.
- K-5 students who are required to isolate or quarantine will be able to remote into their current class for the duration of their isolation or quarantine.
- Remote Learning Academy is not an option at this time. Students currently in RLA will remain in RLA. The RLA schedule is being adjusted slightly to accommodate synchronous Specials in the morning, but will otherwise stay the same.
- In order to support best instructional practices we are providing teachers with professional learning time. Our teachers need more time to collaborate on instructional and curriculum adjustments that meet the challenges of a blended learning environment.
- A K-5 parent webinar is scheduled for Tuesday, December 15, 2020 at 7:00 PM to answer any additional questions you may have about the elementary plan. YouTube link: <https://youtu.be/9NWVU8x59KY>

Grades 6-12: Students will follow their current hybrid day schedule, with the addition of Wednesday as a partial in-school day of instruction, beginning the week of January 4.

- All Wednesdays will follow an early release schedule (High School dismissal 11 am, Middle School dismissal 12 pm), to address the need for individual student supports and staff professional learning. On short weeks (3 or 4 school days), Wednesday will follow the regular full day schedule.
- High School will publish a monthly 4-day cohort rotation schedule to balance the number of times each cohort sees all their teachers and the number of days they are in/out of school.

- We considered a half day schedule in grades 6-12, but it would have resulted in an unacceptable reduction of instructional time.
- The work to increase student engagement and improve live remote instruction in both middle and high school continues, as we do not believe it is safe to reduce distancing for grades 6 - 8 and bring more students back into buildings at this time.
- As with K-5, we need to support best instructional practices so we are providing teachers with professional learning time on Wednesdays. Our teachers need more time to collaborate on instructional and curriculum adjustments that meet the challenges of a blended learning environment
- Remote Learning Academy grades 6-8 will follow the new Middle School schedule. Students currently in RLA will remain in RLA.
- As there are limited changes to the current schedules, any questions should be directed to your child's team, counselor, or building administrator.

We appreciate your support as we continue to focus on safely bringing back as many students as we can in this increasingly difficult environment.

Stay well,

Mike