

## Mount Greylock Regional School District School Committee

**Location:** Zoom Remote Meeting

**Date:** Thursday, September 24, 2020

**Time:** 6:00 pm

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/92598429280?pwd=QnJJWVg5djJpT0w5OExNcjVvaWhlZz09>

Meeting ID: 925 9842 9280

Passcode: 738777

One tap mobile

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+13017158592,,92598429280# US (Germantown)

**Per Governor Baker's order suspending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law, M.G.L. c. 30A sec. 20, the public will not be allowed to physically access this School Committee meeting.**

*This meeting will also be posted on the MGRSD YouTube page*

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCLR0nrLhpZHlyPFUhaMxPSg>

### Open Session Agenda

- I. Call to order
- II. MISSION: At Mount Greylock Regional School District, our mission is to create a community of learners working together in a safe and challenging learning environment that encourages restorative based processes, respect, inclusive diversity, courtesy, integrity and responsibility through high expectations and cooperation resulting in life-long learning and personal growth.
- III. Public Comment
- IV. School Reopening Report
- V. Budgetary Implications of Reopening **VOTE**
- VI. Black Lives Matter signs discussion
- VII. Upcoming meetings:
  - A. Public Forum re: Reopening, September 30
  - B. School Committee meeting, October 8
- VIII. Other business not anticipated by the Chair within 48 hours of meeting
- IX. Motion to Adjourn

**From:** [Stephen Dravis](#)  
**To:** [School Committee](#)  
**Subject:** Public comment for Sept. 24  
**Date:** Thursday, September 10, 2020 7:57:33 PM

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Dear School Committee,

This comment is in regard to ALL items on the Sept. 24 agenda and any future agendas because it concerns the transparency the School Committee should provide to allow residents to comment on ANY items on said agendas.

On the district's web page, there is a place to put the packets for each meeting so that material can be reviewed by the public. Sometimes it's updated shortly after a meeting. Sometimes it takes longer.

All of that material should be available in advance of the meeting, preferably as soon as the agenda is posted. It is unreasonable to require residents to submit comments in advance (or sign up for comment if/when regular public meetings are possible) when they have no idea what there is to comment about.

I have asked about this in the past and been told that there are "confidential materials" included in the packet the committee receives. If that's the case, the simple solution is to put redacted packets on the website. Looking at the Sept. 10 meeting as an example, it is difficult to see how the materials on a copier lease or a proposed policy change could be "confidential."

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

--Stephen Dravis  
Williamstown, Massachusetts

Dear Remote Academy Families,

We are excited to be able to share the news that our MGRSD Elementary Remote Academy is fully staffed and excitedly preparing for the transition to the remote academy on October 5.

Our instructors are as follows:

- ❖ Kindergarten: Erin Jennings
  - Ms. Jennings earned her Master's in Education from Simmons College and has worked as a teacher at both Lanesborough and Williamstown Elementary WES since 2016.
- ❖ 1st & 2nd grades: Abbi Luczynski
  - Ms. Luczynski earned her BS in Education from MCLA. She did her student teaching in WES teacher, Kathy Morris', second grade last year and joins us as MGRSD faculty this year.
- ❖ 3rd & 4th grades: Jennifer Szymanski
  - Ms. Szymanski is a long-time district educator! She received her Master's in Education from Lesley University and has worked as a teacher at Lanesborough Elementary School since 1994.
- ❖ 5th & 6th grades: Alexandra Scott
  - Ms. Scott joined the faculty at WES in 2017 after earning her Master's in Education from Brandeis University.
- ❖ Special education: Kayla Tarjick
  - Ms. Tarjick began her career as a paraprofessional at WES in 2017 and has since received her Master's Degree in Education and her licensure in special education from MCLA. She joins MGRSD this year as part of the faculty.
- ❖ Instructional support paraprofessionals: Cassie Beverly and Alicia Woodbury
  - Both Ms. Woodbury and Mrs. Beverly have served as paraprofessionals at Lanesborough Elementary School, Ms. Woodbury since 2019 and Mrs. Beverly since 2017.

Each classroom teacher will be responsible for teaching two grade levels, however, this will not be multiage grouping. Grade level students will be assigned to a cohort with their remote grade level peers for core instruction. The detailed schedule will be released in the coming days when hybrid schedules are released, but we can share that the blocks for core instruction will mirror the hybrid schedule and will fall between 8:30-11:10 and 12:25-3:05 on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. Grade level core instruction times are noted below. Wednesdays, which are remote school days for everyone, will be a blend of synchronous and asynchronous core instruction, specialists, and support sessions with paras.

- Kindergarten: 12:25-3:05
- 1st grade: 8:30-11:10
- 2nd grade: 12:25-3:05
- 3rd grade: 8:30-11:10

- 4th grade: 12:25-3:05
- 5th grade: 8:30-11:10
- 6th grade: 12:25-3:05

During the core instruction times noted above, your child will be receiving primarily synchronous instruction with their grade level peers. Students will experience the same curriculum for reading/writing, math, science and social studies as their hybrid peers and will use the same learning platforms and software.

During the half of the day counter to their core instruction, students will attend remote specialists with their hybrid peers, engage in asynchronous activities assigned by their remote academy teacher, receive special education support (as designated by IEPs) and attend check-ins with a remote paraprofessional who will be available to assist with school work as needed. Though the schedule will designate blocks of time for asynchronous work, we encourage families to capitalize on the flexible nature of asynchronous assignments and to engage with them at times that work best for you and your student.

We have designed an [FAQ](#) that can help answer some of the questions you may have. If you have additional questions, please feel free to contact us.

In closing, please know that we are excited to be able to offer our remote students of MGRSD a district-created program, using district-vetted curricula, staffed by our own faculty, which allows them to remain connected to their in-person peers. We have great confidence that, as we continue to face some unknowns in a less than ideal time, we will do so together with creativity, patience, and perseverance for the benefit of our shared children.

Sincerely,

Robert Putnam, Interim Superintendent  
Joelle Brookner, Director of Curriculum and Instruction  
Elea Kaatz, Director of Academic Technology  
Kristen Thompson, Williamstown Elementary School Principal  
Nolan Pratt, Lanesborough Elementary School Principal

## MGRSD Elementary Remote Academy Frequently Asked Questions

### **What exactly does the Elementary Remote Academy offer?**

The Elementary Remote Academy is designed for students who opt for remote learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. This option will not require students to come to school in order to have access to learning.

Students will maintain access to rigorous and engaging curriculum and instruction from home, and the district is putting significant effort toward creating parity in terms of the education offered by the Elementary Remote Academy when compared to hybrid instruction.

The curriculum offered in the Elementary Remote Academy is the same curriculum offered to our students who receive instruction in-person.

### **Will my child still be a part of their currently assigned school?**

Yes. Though your child may be in a remote class with children from both the district's elementary schools, your child will officially stay assigned to their current school of residence.

### **What will my child's day look like?**

According to DESE: *Students must have regular, consistent opportunities to access live, synchronous instruction, student-to-student interaction, collaborative assignments/projects, teacher feedback, and other needed supports (e.g., semi-weekly office hours, individual check-ins with students bi-weekly, etc.), as they are critical for student academic growth and meaningful student and family engagement.*

In recognition of elementary students' developmental levels, the remote day will follow a regular school day schedule as much as possible and will mirror the elementary AM/PM hybrid schedules. However, out of respect for family schedules, there will be opportunities for you to complete activities at times that work best for your unique needs. To that end, your child will have structured **synchronous** learning time on a consistent daily schedule, as well as **asynchronous** activities that can be completed on a schedule that works for your family.

- **Synchronous** learning time is live instruction with a teacher. Live instruction with a teacher will prioritize core instruction and new learning, relationship building, opportunities for interacting with peers, and personalized support.

- **Asynchronous** learning time will consist of a combination of the elements below and can be completed throughout the day on a schedule that works for your family. These elements will appear for students of all ages in developmentally appropriate ways.
  - Asynchronous learning opportunities could include:
    - Recorded instruction by your child's teacher or specialists;
    - Assigned activities (either digital or hands-on) to build skills or knowledge or practice and reinforce learning; and
    - Reading (assigned and personal choice reading).

### **Who will teach my child?**

All teachers in the Remote Academy are certified District educators and hold proper certifications. Your child may be assigned to a teacher of record who is based at either Lanesborough or Williamstown Elementary. Regardless of their teacher, your child will still be enrolled in their current school - they will just be cross-enrolled to be assigned to their Remote Academy teacher.

### **Who will be my child's classmates?**

For core instruction, classes will be assigned by grade level and will be a mix of students from Lanesborough Elementary and Williamstown Elementary. Remote Academy students will be scheduled into specialist classes with their hybrid peers in order to maintain relationships with students in their grade level.

### **I read that teachers will be teaching more than one grade level. What does that mean?**

Each teacher will be assigned to teach two grade levels, but all classes will be single grade cohorts; there will be no multi-age grouping for core classes. Each teacher holds a teaching license for the grades to which they are assigned. Students' time with their Remote Academy teacher will be the same as hybrid students' time with their teachers. Academic support, specialists, and asynchronous assignments will comprise the balance of a student's time.

### **What if my child has an IEP or 504 Plan?**

The district will ensure tight collaboration between your child's teacher, academic support, the remote special education teacher, the special education department, and the English Language

Learners coordinator (ELL), to ensure all required supports are in place based on your child's specific needs.

For example, a student who receives special education services could receive their service time in any or all of the following ways, based on their IEP goals:

- Special education staff pulling them into small group support for the area(s) identified in their IEP;
- Special education teacher co-teaching synchronous instruction with the general education teacher in order to provide extra support; and
- Special education teachers provide modified or alternate asynchronous instruction (explicit teaching and practice activities) to give your child repeated practice toward their goals.

### **Does attendance count?**

According to the Massachusetts DESE, schools must take daily attendance whether a student is in person or remote. To receive credit for attendance for the day, students must be “present” by participating in at least half of each day’s scheduled structured learning time activities, defined as “time during which students are engaged in regularly scheduled instruction, learning activities, or learning assessments within the curriculum for study of the ‘core subjects’ and ‘other subjects.’ In addition to classroom time where both teachers and students are present, structured learning time may include directed study, independent study, technology-assisted learning, presentations by persons other than teachers, school-to-work programs, and statewide student performance assessments.”

Students who cannot be reached, who convey they are unable to participate that day, or who demonstrate less than half of the day’s scheduled structured learning time activities will be marked as absent.

The same rules governing excused/unexcused absences for in-person learning, govern the Remote Academy. Please check your school’s handbook for more information.

### **What equipment and materials are needed?**

Your child will receive a school-issued Chromebook for their use and access to the district’s G Suite learning platform.

In addition, any paper texts, workbooks, and math/science tools needed will be issued from the school. Arrangements will be made for you to pick up an instructional kit from your school of residence prior to the start of school.

You should plan to have basic school supplies (paper, scissors, ruler, glue sticks, etc.) available for your child at home. If you need help accessing school supplies, please be in touch with your child's teacher or principal, and they will provide you with what you need.

### **What learning system platforms will be used?**

- Students in grades K - 1 will use Seesaw. Students in grades 2-6 will use Google Classroom. All grades will use Zoom as the platform for synchronous learning.
- All students will have access to a wide array of software for educational purposes (Lexia, IXL, NewsELA, etc.).

### **Will there be any training for parents and students on how to access the learning platforms and what happens if we need tech support at home?**

Yes, students are currently engaged with remote learning at both elementary schools and are becoming familiar with all the tools they need. This link to [parent resources](#) is available on the district website and in teachers' online classrooms. A district-wide tech help desk is in the final stages of production and will be launched soon. As always, school-based technology staff will be available throughout the year for troubleshooting issues as they arise.

### **Will my child have to take MCAS?**

All students in grades 3-6 will be required to participate in MCAS, regardless of whether they learn remotely or in-person.

### **How will I communicate with my child's teacher?**

DESE requires that remote learning programs include regular, two-way communication between students, educators, and families to ensure students and families have meaningful opportunities to connect regularly with staff.

Your child's teacher will communicate with you before October 5 to introduce themselves and tell you the best ways to be in touch. This will likely be via a number of ways: email, phone calls, and through Google Classroom or Seesaw.

Teachers will make every effort to be in touch often and to respond to you in a timely manner within their work hours.



### **What are the behavioral expectations and consequences?**

The same behavioral expectations and policies that apply to students and teachers in-person apply in the Remote Academy. Please consult your school's parent/guardian handbook for more information.

Additionally, expectations for classroom community relationships and interactions on Zoom will be communicated with students and parents by your child's teacher at the start of school.

### **What happens if the District goes from an in-person or hybrid model to become remote?**

The Remote Academy is a stand-alone option. Your child will stay remote and with their assigned class, while the rest of the district may move between in-person, hybrid, and remote models.

### **Can my child exit the Elementary Remote Academy and return to in-person instruction during the school year if something changes during the year?**

- Yes. Students can transition from the Remote Academy back into an in-person instruction at their home school if something changes for your family during the year. **Transitions in will be possible at the end of the first trimester (November 30).**
- Likewise, a student may transition to the Remote Academy from in-person instruction during the school year as well. **Transitions in either direction will be possible at the end of the first trimester (November 30).** Steps will be communicated leading up to that time to help create a smooth transition for students and schools.
- At the end of the year, your child will return to their school of residence.

### **Who is the point of contact for the Remote Academy?**

The principals of the elementary schools remain the administrators of record for the Remote Academy. The principal of your child's school of residence is your primary point of contact.