

## ***South Portland Schools: Reopening Fall 2021***

We are pleased to provide a plan for bringing all South Portland Schools students back to five days per week in-person learning for September. Our administrative team, informed by family and staff surveys and ongoing discussions with a range of stakeholders, has considered many options, reviewed plans from surrounding districts and states, and consulted with up to date public health guidance. As we review updated guidance and receive input from families, staff, students and community we will continue to develop and strengthen the plan.

Plan options were drafted using four lenses:

1. By design strives to ensure equitable access to opportunity for ALL of our students
2. Practices and protocols as outlined by the CDC and our health staff will be in place and can be followed
3. Students in PreK-12 will receive in-person instruction five days per week
4. Plans for periodic remote or hybrid if public health advisories dictate

We believe the plan can work when viewed through these four lenses. Also, we can execute this plan with strategic use of federal funds with no impact on the local taxpayer.

### **Highlights of the draft plan:**

#### **School Highlights**

1. Reopen all South Portland Schools to in-person instruction five (5) days per week for all students with regular school hours as noted in the School Calendar for 2021-22.
2. We will not be offering a distance learning option for 2021-22 as we did in 2020-21. We encourage families to reach out to their school principal or nurse if you have specific questions about your student.
3. Utilize federal funding for additional staffing as needed to meet the room capacities made necessary in order to follow the 3-foot distancing guideline.
4. Utilize federal funding in furniture needed to set all classrooms up for 3-foot distancing, particularly at the elementary level.
5. Utilize federal funding to ensure services to provide equitable access to opportunity and to accelerate learning through additional in-school, after school and summer learning programs and supports.
6. Students will continue to be in cohorts that will be expanded from single classroom cohorts to grade level or grade span cohorts depending upon size in the fall. This will allow for flexible and efficient delivery of instruction including special education, English

Language Learner Services, other specialized programming, lunches and specials while continuing to provide cohorts for contact tracing.

7. In order to create additional classrooms due to increasing enrollment at Skillin and to meet distancing requirements, the three fifth grade classes at Skillin will be placed at Memorial Middle School and the two fifth grade classes at Brown will be placed at Mahoney Middle School. Other schools are projected to have adequate space to meet the 3-foot distance requirement.
8. Return to our highly valued extracurricular and co-curricular activities following the then applicable Maine CDC and MDOE guidance. We anticipate a much more normal and joyous level of activity across our schools with music and athletics.

### **Health & Safety Highlights:**

1. Continue to follow all [Maine CDC guidance](#) and [Maine DOE Six requirements](#) for safely reopening school as they evolve, which at this time includes use of masks/face coverings. This will be detailed in Return to School Handbooks updated in August to follow the then current guidelines for safe in-person learning.
2. The 3-foot classroom distancing guideline for students will be followed district-wide.
3. The 6-foot distance requirement for unmasked students while eating and drinking will be followed district-wide.
4. Maintain current level of nursing staff, with one full time nurse in each elementary and middle school and two nurses at the high school.
5. Strongly encourage COVID-19 vaccination for all staff, students and community members as it becomes available. South Portland Schools will publicize and help to coordinate vaccination clinics to support this goal.

### **What else you should know:**

- We will need families' help with transportation for one more year if guidelines do not change for the fall. With limited numbers allowed on buses our fleet is stretched beyond capacity.
- We strongly encourage all those eligible (currently 12 years old and older) to get vaccinated prior to the start of school in September. The more members of our community who are vaccinated as we enter the 2021-22 school year the less likely for COVID-19 to spread in our schools and our community.

### **Transportation**

- To the extent possible, we need parents to transport students until such time as distancing guidelines on buses are no longer in effect. This way we will be able to provide transportation for all those eligible who require transportation to get to and from school each day.

- SPSD will contact all families eligible for transportation to determine if they require bussing.
- Special Education students who have transportation written into their Individualized Education Plan (IEP) will receive transportation as specified in their IEP. We would however welcome parents transporting students when and if feasible. Please reach out to your child's case manager if you are not sure if transportation is in your child's IEP.

# Reopening Plans

## Fall 2021

### **Elementary School: Pre-K-5**

#### **Student's Daily Schedule**

- Students will continue to be in cohorts that will be expanded from single classroom cohorts to grade level or grade span cohorts depending upon size in the fall. This will allow for flexible and efficient delivery of instruction including special education, English Language Learner Services, other specialized programming, lunches and specials while continuing to provide cohorts for contact tracing.
- Students will receive specialized programming in both the classroom, as well as being pulled out to an alternative location when appropriate for services (Special Education, Rtl, ELL and AG).

#### **Classroom Capacity and Need for Realignment**

- Classroom capacities have been calculated using 3-foot distancing. The typical elementary classroom is approximately 675 square feet and can fit 20 students with a teacher to allow for some movement around the classroom. Quite a few classrooms are smaller than this and a few are larger and capacities have been adjusted on a school by school and room by room basis.
- We are using classrooms in our elementary schools up to their capacity with the three-foot distance guideline. This creates challenges in some schools. In order to place all students who are projected to enroll in classrooms in each school the three fifth grade classes at Skillin will be placed at Memorial Middle School and the two fifth grade classes at Brown will be placed at Mahoney Middle School. These students will continue on the same elementary school schedule.
- Every effort will be made to have a student attend their neighborhood school but based on capacity may need to go to another school.

#### **Arrivals and Departures**

- Pick-up/drop-off procedures will maintain timelines and entrance points to the school building in order to keep crowds from gathering and to facilitate distancing at arrival. More specific information will be supplied school by school.

### **Snacks/Meals Plan**

- Due to emergency federal guidelines, ALL students are eligible for free breakfast and lunch for the 2021-22 school year. It remains essential for families to complete [school nutrition forms to determine eligibility for free or reduced price meals](#) to access other benefits for students and for the district to get the maximum amount of federal funding to support students.
- Students will be spaced 6 feet apart when eating.
  - Plans are under development for specifics at each school that will align with current CDC guidelines for eating

### **Specials ( Art, Music, PE)**

- All specials will be taught in person. Schedules and space details are currently under development. Details of how fifth grade band instruction will be provided are still being determined.

### **Visitors to our schools**

- Meetings with families will continue to be mostly online at this time. This will be re-evaluated in the fall.
- Volunteer opportunities will continue to be virtual at this time (examples: Guest readers/speakers, classroom material preparations, etc.). This will be re-evaluated in the fall.

### **Before and After Care**

- Will continue following CDC Guidelines.

## **Middle School: Grades 6-8**

### **Student's Daily Schedule**

- There will be four longer blocks per day on a red/white day schedule. Students will move from class to class and will have minimal cohorting. Classrooms will be configured following CDC guidance of three-foot spacing between students.
- All students will take Humanities, Math, and Science/STEM focused courses next year. Students will also have the opportunity to take an additional two related arts classes (eg art, health, PE, etc) a trimester. Band and Chorus will be offered for students enrolled in those classes.
- Each grade level will have two teams (with dedicated teachers for half of each grade) to provide deeper connections between teachers and students and among students. Students will move from class to class throughout the day .
- An extended Connections/advisory period and scheduled intervention block during the school day will help to address students' social, emotional and academic needs.

### **Transportation**

- Please see transportation section above

### **Arrivals/Departures**

- Pick-up/drop-off will continue with current procedures for the same entrance points in order to keep crowds from gathering.

### **Snacks/Meals Plan**

- Due to emergency federal guidelines, ALL students are eligible for free breakfast and lunch for the 2021-22 school year. It remains essential for families to complete [school nutrition forms to determine eligibility for free or reduced price meals](#) to access other benefits for students and for the district to get the maximum amount of federal funding to support students.
- Students will eat breakfast and lunch spaced 6 feet apart in available spaces including classrooms, cafeteria, and other school spaces.

### **Electives and Related Arts**

- In accordance with the updated CDC guidelines and specialized PPE, related arts courses will be back to being taught in person, by trimester or year long.

### **After School Activities**

- We are planning for the full resumption of middle school athletics and activities following Maine CDC and community sports guidelines. Field availability and transportation may be issues that we need to work around, in part due to the start of construction of the new middle school on Wescott Road immediately behind the existing school.

### **Visitors to our schools**

- Meetings with families will continue to be mostly online at this time. This will be re-evaluated in the fall.
- Volunteer opportunities will continue to be virtual at this time (examples: Guest readers/speakers, classroom material preparations, etc.). This will be re-evaluated in the fall.

## **High School: Grades 9-12**

### **Daily Schedule**

- South Portland High School will have four block class periods on a red/white day schedule.
- School will begin at 8:10 a.m. and end at 2:25 p.m.
- Students will move from class to class and will have minimal cohorting.
- Sections will be created and room assignments made consider the 3 foot distancing guideline. Desks in classrooms will be placed to allow for 3-foot distancing.
- Remediation time will be scheduled to assist students with academic work and course completion from previous classes not completed for credit.
- Home Base (Advisor/Advisee time) will be conducted once per week for 30 minutes. This will allow for presentation-sized events (from Guidance, Administration, Student Groups etc) and allow for team-building activities and academic checks.
- The school will be dismissed by floors at the end of each day to stagger the amount of students in the halls.

There are a number of task forces of staff members meeting regularly to develop and refine guidelines for the Student Handbook, covering areas including:

- Attendance

- Remediation
- Transitioning students back to full time, in-person and providing support
- Logistics

### **Transportation**

- Please see transportation section above

### **Arrivals/Departures (i.e. will you still need parents to transport? Will pick-up/drop-off be the same or different?)**

Buses will arrive and depart in the regular bus loop. Parents who drop off students will have their students enter at the same door as the bus students. Students and staff who park in the student lot will enter the Martin Field entrance to prevent logjams at the bus entrance.

### **Snacks/Meals Plan**

- Due to emergency federal guidelines, ALL students are eligible for free breakfast and lunch for the 2021-22 school year. It remains essential for families to complete [school nutrition forms to determine eligibility for free or reduced price meals](#) to access other benefits for students and for the district to get the maximum amount of federal funding to support students.
- Meals will be served for breakfast and lunch, and students will eat in two different locations. There will be three or four lunch periods.

### **Activities and Clubs**

- Athletics will continue to operate following public health guidance and guidelines developed by the Maine Principals' Association (MPA).
- Marching Band will operate following public health guidance and guidelines developed by the Maine Band Directors' Association.
- All Clubs and Activities will return and be offered during their traditional after-school hours.

### **Visitors to our schools**

- Meetings with families will continue to be mostly online at this time. This will be re-evaluated in the fall.
- Volunteer opportunities will continue to be virtual at this time (examples: Guest readers/speakers, classroom material preparations, etc.). This will be re-evaluated in the fall.