



# SMCPS Reopening Plan

**Recover. Refine. Return.**

August 2022 Update

[www.smcps.org](http://www.smcps.org)

# SMCPS Reopening Plan 2021

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## Introduction

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### Overview

This reopening plan is a continuation of the work presented in the SMCPS [Recovery plan](#) and its February 2021 [Addendum](#). Activities herein build upon the detailed work of the Recovery Plan and work towards the full scope of policies, procedures, and actions of SMCPS operations detailed on [www.smcps.org](http://www.smcps.org).

For the 2022-2023 school year, SMCPS has worked toward pre-pandemic processes for school operations. This plan provides further details and describes continued processes that have been affected by the last two years of operations.

#### **Goal:**

To reopen with consistency to pre-pandemic policies and procedures with an understanding and sensitivity to the transition needed for students, staff, and the entire learning community.

The planning process for reopening schools following the pandemic included key questions:

#### **Recover:**

- How will we support students' learning recovery, including addressing learning gaps and accelerating academic success?
- How will we support students' social and emotional needs as they transition back to full-time school schedules?

#### **Refine:**

- How will we refine the delivery models for instruction, programs, and student services?

#### **Return:**

- How will we institutionalize procedures for a safe return to school?

# Guiding Principles for SMCPs Safe Return to School Planning

In the transition to returning students to school safely, actions are guided by key principles that frame our operational guidelines. They include:

- **Social and Emotional Supports** - Addressing the social and emotional needs of students as they transition back to full-time schedules.
- **Instructional Recovery and Acceleration** - Providing academic support, scaffolding, and engaging learning to ensure success for all students.
- **Providing Alternative Instructional Models** - Providing learning platforms that students can access for both in-person and online learning environments.
- **Clean and Healthy Environments** - Ensuring students and staff are working, learning, traveling, and eating in clean and healthy spaces.

Further, the following elements are addressed throughout our practices:

- **Equity** - All actions and plans will be reviewed through an equity and inclusion lens. It is imperative that all students have access and opportunity for success and support
- **Engaging and High Quality Instruction** - Instruction is designed to ensure students work toward mastery of the instructional outcomes for their grade level and content. As students return to school, instruction is designed to help them recover and accelerate their learning.
- **High Quality Professional Development** - Staff at all levels of the organization participate in ongoing professional development designed to assist them in their roles and meet the needs of their students.
- **Communication and Collaboration** - Open, multi-faceted, and collaborative planning and communication provide our greatest opportunities for growth.
- **Technology Sustainability and Support** - We must ensure that the resources are available and connected for the continuity of learning - whether in person, or wherever is necessary.

## Communication, Input, Review, and Revision

The SMCPs [Recovery plan](#) and its February 2021 [Addendum](#) were developed in collaboration with a comprehensive and representative team of stakeholders (as noted in the Recovery Plan, p. 5). The Reopening plan builds on the key elements of this recovery plan, and the essential elements to recover, refine, and return to the normalcy of a full 180-day in-person school year schedule.

The SMCPs Reopening Plan is reviewed periodically, with public updates as it relates to this plan and [ESSER grant](#) activities, twice yearly to the Board of Education. Through these updates, the public will be informed of the current status and have opportunities to provide feedback and input. The Superintendent presented an overview of the Reopening Plan at the August 11, 2021, Board of Education meeting and provided information to the public about how to access and provide [feedback](#) for the plan. The August 2022 update was shared at the August 10, 2022, Board of Education meeting, with information about providing [feedback](#) for the plan

On a bi-weekly basis, since the beginning of the pandemic, SMCPs has presented updates at Board of Education meetings as well as through ongoing communications via letters directly to families. A full list of these communications is archived on our [website](#), and the full library of videos, including Board of Education updates are hosted on our [YouTube channel](#).

The SMCPS reopening plan and ESSER initiatives have been presented to multiple audiences to seek input, which includes highlights of various elements. Presentations and meetings include: Collaborative meeting with non-public partners (10/28/21); NAACP partnership meeting (9/22/21, 12/8/21); Leadership Maryland (12/2/21). In addition, monthly meetings with administrative/supervisory leaders and education associations have addressed elements of the recovery plan. Student input through the Superintendent's Student Leadership Advisory Council (SSLAC) has sought in addressing appropriate elements at meetings on 10/14/21 and 1/26/22. An essential partner in the process of reopening has been the St. Mary's County Health Department. Several times per week, staff from SMCPS and the SMCHD meet to discuss specific issues, and address changes to protocols based on evolving guidance from MSDE, the CDC, and MDH. Finally, at Board meetings, the Superintendent's Update directly addressed reopening elements in each update. The recovery plan is posted on the website, and this [survey](#) remains open for stakeholders, and has been linked in our Reopening Plan, and shared in presentations to various audiences about our Reopening and ESSER initiatives.

Questions related to this plan can be directed to the [Office of Strategic Planning and Communications](#).

# Health and Safety

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The health and safety of our students and staff is our primary focus. We will rely on the guidance provided by the Maryland Department of Health, MSDE, the CDC, and our local Health Department to ensure students and staff are safe when entering school buildings.

## Collaboration with Health Department

As an outgrowth of the pandemic, a solid partnership has developed with the local health department. This will continue as we reopen schools. St. Mary's County Public Schools will follow protocols in collaboration with the St. Mary's County Health Department, consistent with the [MSDE COVID Guidance \(July 2022\)](#) from the Maryland Department of Health and MSDE

### Appendix A: MDH/MSDE Guidance for COVID-19 Symptoms, Isolation, and Quarantine

Staff or Student/Child with	Guidance for Management
COVID-19 symptoms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Staff or student/child should not attend or work in a school or child care setting</li><li>COVID-19 testing is recommended</li><li>If test is negative, may return when symptoms have improved, no fever for 24 hours without medication, and applicable criteria in the <a href="#">Communicable Diseases Summary</a> have been met</li></ul>
Positive test for COVID-19, regardless of symptoms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Staff or student/child must stay home for 5 days from the start of symptoms or from the date of the positive test if no symptoms</li><li>After day 5, may return if symptoms have improved and no fever for at least 24 hours without medication</li><li>Upon return, must wear a mask for 5 additional days (except while eating, drinking, sleeping or outside)</li><li>If unable to wear a mask, may return if they have a negative test at day 5 or later; otherwise, they should remain at home for days 6 -10</li></ul>
Close contact with someone with known or suspected COVID-19 but no symptoms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Staff or student/child can continue to work in or attend school and child care regardless of vaccination status</li><li>Those who can mask should do so for 10 days from the last day of exposure</li><li>A test at 3-5 days after exposure is recommended, especially for those who cannot mask (ex. children under 2 years of age).</li></ul>

People with symptoms of infectious diseases, including COVID-19, influenza, respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), and gastrointestinal infections should stay home and follow-up with their healthcare provider for additional direction. Staying home when sick can lower the risk of spreading infectious diseases, including the virus that causes COVID-19, to other people. People who are at risk for getting very sick with COVID-19 who test positive should consult with a healthcare provider right away for possible treatment, even if their symptoms are mild.

In accordance with applicable laws and regulations, schools and ECE programs should allow flexible, non-punitive, and supportive paid sick leave policies and practices. These policies should encourage sick workers to stay home without fear of retaliation, loss of pay, loss of employment, or other negative impacts. Schools should also provide excused absences for students who are sick, avoid policies that incentivize coming to school while sick, and support children who are learning at home if they are sick or in quarantine. Schools and ECE programs should ensure that employees are aware of and understand these policies and avoid language that penalizes or stigmatizes staying home when sick.

SMCPS, as per the Negotiated Agreement, provides a minimum of 10 days of sick leave per year, which can accumulate from year to year, if unused. Additionally, SMCPS excuses student absences for illness. If anyone contacts HR or another office, the office should communicate to the staff member that they should contact their doctor for guidance.

For more information visit [www.smcps.org/ss/health-and-safety](http://www.smcps.org/ss/health-and-safety).



#### **Hand Washing**

SMCPS students and staff members are encouraged to wash their hands frequently throughout the school day.



#### **Staying Home When Sick**

Students and staff should stay home with any signs/symptoms of illness.



#### **Hand Sanitizer**

Hand sanitizer and hand sanitizing stations are provided throughout SMCPS buildings.



#### **Cleaning**

Building services staff continue to perform routine cleaning and disinfecting. Special attention is given to high-touch areas.



#### **Covering Coughs and Sneezes**

Covering coughs and sneezes can help prevent the spread of serious respiratory illnesses like influenza, respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), whooping cough, and COVID-19.



#### **Face Coverings Optional**

Individuals may wear a face covering/mask if they choose, or by direction of a healthcare provider.

# Components of Safe Reopening

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As St. Mary's County Public Schools return for a full schedule, students and staff return to the traditional routines of a daily schedule. With this return, we recognize that processes are refined and adapted with flexibility and understanding of the experiences of the last 16 months. To this end, the following components are addressed:

## Equity

- SMCPSS has an Equity Policy, [ACA](#), approved in December 2019 and related regulations [ACA-R](#) developed in 2020. This policy and regulation guide the work of SMCPSS in matters related to Equity.
- The school system, following all procurement procedures, put out a Request for Proposals for a system wide educational needs assessment to be completed during the 2021-2022 school year. Insight Education Group from Encino, California was contracted to conduct this needs assessment which included a series of surveys for staff encompassing all positions, parents and caregivers, and secondary students. Additionally, there were focus groups with parents and caregivers, high school students, and stakeholder groups. The results of this comprehensive needs assessment have informed and guided our work to date.
  - SMCPSS conducted a contracted Equity Needs Assessment by Insight Education Group from Encino, California. This comprehensive needs assessment included surveys of staff, family and caregivers, secondary students, and community partners. Additionally, there were planned focus groups of randomly selected high school students, parents, and community stakeholders. The results of this needs assessment were synthesized and Insight provided a detailed report on the status.
  - SMCPSS', based on the results of the Needs Assessment Report, began and has implemented a District Equity Team (DET) that meets quarterly during the school year and is facilitated by the Equity Assurance Coordinator. The DET includes system level departmental meetings and meeting agendas and discussion focus on mitigating obstacles for all students, ensuring that considerations are made with an equity lens. Participants include leadership from the Division of Instruction, Supporting Services including Transportation, Human Resources, and Fiscal Services.
  - The SMCPSS Citizens' Advisory for Educational Equity is scheduled to begin in the 2022-2023 school year under the direction of the Equity Assurance Coordinator. This advisory group will provide perspective, insight, and parent and community perspectives relative to issues of equity. This advisory group will be facilitated by the new Equity Assurance Coordinator when the current vacancy is filled and representatives from the Department of Equity, Engagement, and Early Access will provide support with the Citizens' Advisory. This advisory will meet quarterly during the 2022-2023 school year and provide additional guidance and direction for system initiatives and ensure that school system staff have a better understanding of community challenges and concerns related to equity.
  - SMCPSS has identified an equity leader position at each school and staff receive a stipend. This practice will continue. These Education Diversity Equity Achievement Leaders (EDEAL) positions meet monthly/quarterly with the Equity Assurance Coordinator to discuss questions, share perspective, and to highlight upcoming events that celebrate and recognize various community events.
  - Professional development was planned for the Administrative and Supervisory staff beginning with the first administrative meeting of the 2021-2022 school year and will continue in 2022-2023. With a significant number of new Administrative and Supervisory staff, it is important to offer training on Equity policy ACA and related regulations. School system executive leadership has provided direct guidance to principals about equity practices, navigating the current political climate in schools, and



facilitating a trusting, respectful, and inclusive culture for all. This will also continue and is particularly important with new staff.

- There is an internal staff web page related to equity with vetted resources entitled Equity Matters. There is a parent-facing web page entitled Equity Corner which also details parent resources that have been vetted related to the various areas of focus.

These practices and support systems will continue in 2022-2023.

- SMCPS' Equity Policy, [ACA](#), and the related regulations [ACA-R](#) cross reference each area of the school system to ensure that every child is able to be successful. Using this BOE approved policy and the corresponding regulations, coupled with the results of the Needs Assessment, SMCPS has ensured that all decisions, protocols, and opportunities are viewed through an equity lens. When the evidence indicates that there is an obstacle or barrier, SMCPS works to remove it on behalf of students and their families. For each identified area of the Return to School Plan; a concerted effort has been placed to ensure that all students have the opportunity and the access to technology and connectivity, to equipment, to Mental Health resources and to staff. For example: students who need a device have been provided one. Mental health resources are available and easily accessible for students and their families. Moreover there are Social Emotional Parent and Family Engagement workshops that support Tier I Social Emotional Learning (SEL) supports. This adherence to Equity Policy ACA and the corresponding regulations ACA-R will continue during the 2022-2023 school year.
- Obstacles and barriers to student achievement have been identified and mitigated. Students were provided a device and support for connectivity. Consequently, there is a 1:1 ratio with devices. Additionally, SMCPS developed a technology refresh plan, periodically replacing IT assets, to ensure reliability and maximize performance. The school system is able to translate all documents into numerous languages to support EL families. As our Spanish speaking population is growing, many parent and family engagement events are provided in Spanish. The Title I schools, where there is the largest concentration of Spanish speaking families, have ensured that there are Spanish speaking staff on site to support families. Through the use of grant funding and a local reallocation of staff and resources, early childhood programs targeting low and middle income children have been expanded to provide increased access to pre-school age children. All Pre-K 4 and Head Start 4 students will attend full day programs in 2022-2023. The Schoology platform allows a comprehensive inclusion of core curriculum and has improved communication between students and parents and their teachers. The Schoology platform is in place for Pre-K/Head Start through grade 12 and allows a Home/Hospital Teaching (HHT) student to access content with their HHT teacher. Student Services works collaboratively with Title I to provide support, connect resources, and facilitate support through various agencies. These effective practices will continue in 2022-2023.
- PowerSchool Performance Matters (PM) allows each school and department to drill down into student data, to carefully match students with interventions, and to measure progress while being mindful of a whole child approach, which is critical to equitably preparing each student to reach their full potential. Further, teacher teams meet at least biweekly to monitor assessments at every level and to address learning gaps. Other critical data points are reviewed when following a whole child belief system. These data points include attendance, discipline, parent and family communication, etc.. More details are provided in the content areas. Title I Schools have additional personnel to support a detailed analysis of data as it impacts all students, particularly those living in poverty.
- Additional specific obstacle identification and mitigation is detailed through each content area.

## Instruction

- Schoology will continue to be our LMS for all students K-12 and will house content for all courses taught within SMCPs, including Career and Technical Education (CTE).
- All courses and resources, grades PreK through grade 12 (including CTE), are built using the Maryland College and Career Readiness Standards and State Standards.
- County created required and optional assessments will be administered to all students. These assessments, as well as those formative assessments given by teachers throughout the year in their classrooms, will be used to plan whole group, small group and individual Tier I, II, and III instruction. Baseline data, as well as data gathered throughout the year, will be used to set instructional success goals as well as determine strength and deficit student outcomes/standards. The data will also be disaggregated by race, service group, and gender. Instruction will be targeted to close identified gaps early in the school year. Students will be progress monitored and addressed throughout the school year, through reteaching, recovery, and accelerated learning.
  - A robust assessment workbook has been developed and shared with all SMCPs instructional leaders and staff. This workbook shares all assessments, required and optional, that have been developed and available for all content areas **throughout** the school year. The assessments were developed by content supervisors, in collaboration with the Office of Assessment and Accountability and the Department of Special Education. SMCPs is gathering data to identify readiness on all content standards for all grade levels and courses to meet all learning needs. The data that will be produced from administering these assessments will be disaggregated by mastery standard as well as by race, service group and gender and will be used to determine instructional next steps. Focused deployment of “just in time” recovery and Tier I intervention in all classrooms is a system-wide expectation and has been communicated to all stakeholders. As the data on system-wide required assessments becomes available, it will be shared with the public via this Reopening Plan document. System-wide required assessment data collected from August 2021 through June 2022 is [linked here](#).
  - SMCPs utilizes PowerSchool Performance Matters (PM) to identify unfinished learning and to accelerate learning progress for all students. All state, district, and even classroom assessments can be available in one report, disaggregated. With PM, teachers can administer assessments that provide real-time insights to inform instruction. The platform allows us to easily share disaggregated data so teachers can spend more time focusing on their students’ success. The assessments developed and offered will ensure that we are gathering data throughout the year. This includes assessment data to determine baselines to set standards and project student outcome attainment (beginning of the year); to plan progress monitoring and assessment benchmarking tools (mid-year), and to determine mastery attainment goals on all content standards for all grade levels and courses (end of year). The data that will be produced from administering these assessments will be disaggregated by mastery standard as well as by race, service group and gender and then used to determine instructional next steps or to inform goal setting for SY 23.
  - School staff will be supported to use assessment data through guided data analysis each month during leveled principal meetings (elementary, middle and high); at monthly Instructional Resource Teacher meetings; during both county and school delivered professional development opportunities; as well as through content supervisor newsletters and PLC supports. Individual assessments data will also be shared with parents and students by classroom teachers.
- [Professional development](#) is ongoing throughout the calendar year and will focus on data analysis to determine learning gaps and how to remedy those gaps through accelerated learning approaches and in-the-classroom Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III interventions
- In conjunction with both formative and summative assessments, the PreK-12 MCCRS Curriculum Frameworks have been used in all content areas to unpack the Common Core State Standards and identify the essential skills and knowledge that a student would need in order to master the grade specific standards. The identification of this essential content has been used to make revisions in our curricular guidance, professional development

offerings and resources both purchased and developed. Essential content from the framework guidance has also been used to identify students in need of additional support such as after-school tutoring; summer school; Tier I, II, and III interventions as well as identify those students that have achieved the essential mastery standards.

- Please reference the [SMCPS Recovery Plan](#) for additional information related to curriculum, instruction, and assessment through the Pandemic.

## Specialized Instruction/IEP/504

The provision of special education and related services operates within the broader context of the general education curriculum and instruction, which continues to be a driver. As schools open, staff are required to fully implement students' Individualized Education Programs (IEPs); it is important to remember that a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) continues to be the touchstone for the IEP process, to include determining special education eligibility. Now and during recovery, it is essential to provide FAPE and the provision of early intervention and special education services (IDEA) to the greatest extent possible.

- Compliance with the development, implementation, and monitoring of IFSP/IEPs in accordance with IDEA, COMAR and MSDE, Division of Early Intervention and Special Education Services (DEI/SES) guidance.
  - Local Agency Eligibility
  - Evaluations
  - Eligibility Determinations
  - Individualized Educational Plan (IEP)
    - Annual Reviews
    - Reviews
    - Aligned Goal and Objective Development
    - Progress Monitoring
      - Current
      - Two Year Trend
    - Appropriate Placement and LRE Determination

SMCPS recognizes that some students may require additional needs based on the school closures during the pandemic. The special education department will begin the year by completing grade equivalency assessments, collecting baseline data to assist with further compensatory services. SMCPS has established procedures and protocols to conduct data collection and analysis. Continual and consistent progress monitoring is essential for determining additional, new, or different needs to be addressed through changes to the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) and/or eligibility for Compensatory Services due to a loss of a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). SMCPS will use the Maryland Online IEP to monitor individualized student progress with a two-year data trend and progression related to the individualized goals and objectives pre-pandemic, during the pandemic, and post-pandemic. SMCPS implemented pre, mid, and post iReady assessments to progress monitor. SMCPS will continuously monitor county benchmarks, informal and formal data, and annual reviews of the IEP/504. Baseline data pre, mid, and post-pandemic will be collected to determine student progress and the need for compensatory services.

The special education department will begin the year completing grade equivalency assessments, collecting baseline data to assist with further need for compensatory services.

- County created required and iReady grade equivalency assessments will be administered to all students
- County created required and iReady grade equivalency assessments and other data measures will be used to determine student progress and any recovery/compensatory services that may be needed
- Compensatory related services will be implemented during SY23 which includes Physical Therapy (PT), Occupational Therapy (OT) and Speech and Language Services (SPL)
- Protocols are in place to provide accommodations for students who may be affected by masking protocols as noted below:
  - If there is no masking requirement, families have the option to wear a mask for any reason not limited to immune deficiency.

- If a mask requirement is in place, mask desensitization protocols have been developed to assist with acclimating students to masks for those that have sensitivity issues with mask wearing.
- Non-mask wearing for students with physical and/or cognitive disabilities that do not mask consistently according to CDC will not be required to wear a mask, although precautionary measures will be followed.

## Attendance

Managing and tracking attendance to identify which students are not consistently showing up to school is more essential than ever. Schools will take a positive, problem-solving approach to reducing absenteeism by regularly reviewing attendance data using eSchoolPlus attendance reports and determining the appropriate next steps. School teams will engage in interagency collaboration and coordination among agencies to support the needs of students and families. Individual students and families will be identified and given extra support. Data will also be disaggregated to consider possible trends in those not attending in order to better inform the need for additional interventions. Tiered interventions aimed at addressing obstacles will support all levels of absentees in an effort to improve attendance for all students.

- Attendance will be recorded for in-school and virtual environments using eSchool, the SMCPs Student Information System.
- All schools will engage all students using a Tier 1 universal attendance approach that includes best practices for educating students on the importance of daily attendance. Interventions will be identified and implemented for those students who do not respond.
- School teams composed of teachers, counselors, administrators, and support staff will regularly monitor student attendance data to identify students needing additional support and resources.
- Pupil Personnel Workers will conduct home visits for those students whose attendance is inconsistent to identify barriers to attendance and develop intervention plans.
- For any absence, the current BOE policy and regulation will be followed. All regulations are available to the public via the SMCPs website. Additionally, absence and assignment information and procedures are reviewed with all students at the beginning of each year in all classrooms and posted throughout the year on the school website.
- As with any short-term absence (10 days or less) the SMCPs BOE regulation will be implemented. If a student has a long-term absence and is approved for Home Hospital teaching, then those terms apply.
- As of August 2020, all SMCPs students were issued an electronic device so that all students had and will continue to have the technological support that they need to remain connected to school. All schools have robust web pages with a direct email link of all instructional staff so that students and parents have electronic access to their teachers during an absence. Schoology is the Learning Management System (LMS). It is the expectation, which has been communicated to all stakeholders, that Schoology shall continue to be used by teachers, will serve as a teacher's gradebook in secondary; as a planning tool for supervisors and teachers; as a way to share digital content with teachers and students; and as a repository of approved instructional resources (to include curriculum maps and pacing guides). Use of schoology and deployment of devices to each student ensures that all students will maintain uninterrupted access to their teachers, in their classrooms, and their learning. Use of Schoology and the deployment of devices to each student ensures, should there be an interruption to in-person learning, that all students will maintain uninterrupted access to their teachers, in their classrooms, and their learning to include those supports and services for those English learners, students with disabilities, and other students with service plans. It is to be noted that individualized plans will be reviewed and revised to determine if alternate supports, modifications, and accommodations are needed as a result of an absence or extended absence from school.
- Additional information was included in the [SMCPs Recovery Plan](#)

## Health Services

The SMCPS [Health and Safety](#) Page of the school system website has been updated with the guidance provided by MSDE and in collaboration with the Health Department.

St. Mary's County Public Schools continues to coordinate its response with the St. Mary's County Health Department. Processes are in place to respond to notifications of communicable diseases and to educate our school community on best practices for staying safe and healthy.

- SMCPS will continue to follow required/mandated procedures developed by the MSDE in collaboration with the MD Department of Health and guidance from the CDC and our local health department to make sure students and staff are safe when entering school buildings
- Collaboration with St. Mary's County Health Department to ensure best practice
- Separate areas for routine needs versus ill students will be maintained
- Health education to students, staff, and families on handwashing, face coverings, and maintaining a healthy school environment will continue
- Additional information is included in the [SMCPS Recovery Plan](#) and on the [SMCPS Health and Safety Webpage](#)
- Throughout the 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 school year, these resources were provided and posted:
  - [SMCPS - Health and Safety](#) - This page provides an overview of health services as they relate to COVID-19
  - [SMCPS COVID-19 Process for Staff & Students](#) - This process outlines the steps taken when a student or staff member is exposed to COVID-19 and considered a close contact.
  - These protocols have been updated for 2022-2023 to reflect current status and guidance.

Two [community health centers](#) have been opened connected to our schools - one in the north (at Margaret Brent Middle School) and one in the south (at Spring Ridge Middle School). These sites, operated by the local health department, offer a variety of health services, including testing and vaccinations.

In collaboration with the SMCHD, coordinated vaccination clinics were offered at each elementary school for students ages 5-11. These sessions began in November 2021 and continued in December 2021 to provide for booster shots. Back to school vaccination clinics will be offered by the SMCHD over the summer and will include the option of a COVID vaccination.

For students and staff, SMCPS communicated vaccination clinics in letters, email, social media, and callouts. Additionally, a financial incentive was offered to staff for providing documentation of vaccination. SMCPS will continue to offer resources for students and families, including flu clinics again in schools this year.

## Mental Health Services

It is important to plan for the mental, behavioral and social-emotional well-being of students, staff, and families. SMCPS will continue to implement a tiered system of support to address the mental/behavioral health and social emotional needs of students, identify resources and plan to support the social emotional needs of staff, identify resources and help support the social emotional needs of parents and guardians.

- Mental health and counseling support will continue for both school and virtual environments
- Social-emotional learning lessons facilitated by counselors will increase students self-awareness, academic achievement, and positive behaviors both in and out of the classroom
- Comprehensive mental health services are provided through a multi-tiered system of support (MTSS). The district's MTSS framework for mental health encompasses the continuum of need, promoting mental wellness for all students, identifying and addressing problems before they escalate or become chronic, and providing increasingly intensive services for individual students as needed. Additional information for MTSS is described

here: [Mental Health & Counseling Support Triangle](#).

- SMCPs-employed mental health professionals include school psychologists, school counselors, school social workers, and school nurses who will provide support, services, and resources as needed to students, staff, and parents.
- All mental health staff is trained in the assessment of suicidal risk.
- All staff, including administrators, teachers, transportation staff, safety & security staff, etc are trained in QPR Gatekeeper Training for Suicide Prevention. This course teaches all staff how to recognize, engage/intervene those at risk, and refer a person for appropriate support.

## Technology

- Laptop computers will be provided to each student and staff member for school-related use in accordance with SMCPs policies and regulations
- Computers will have all required software installed so students and staff can participate in both in person and online lessons as delivered by SMCPs staff
- Security software such as malware detection, content filtering, and other security measures will be installed and operational on all SMCPs devices (complete protection is only provided while on the SMCPs network).

## Transportation

- SMCPs Transportation is operating under normal procedures which includes SMCPs bus travel, parent/guardian transport to and from school, and allows students who live within close proximity to their school to walk or bike to and from their school.
- Face Masks - Effective February 25, 2022, the CDC does not require wearing of masks on buses or vans operated by public or private school systems. Effective February 26, 2022, wearing of masks by passengers and drivers on SMCPs school buses and SMCPs Vans will be optional.
- Bus Seating Capacity will return to pre-pandemic levels.
- Bus cleaning
  - Daily bus cleaning will return to pre-pandemic procedures.
  - In the event of a specific occurrence, a school bus will be removed from service, thoroughly cleaned and disinfected.
- All SMCPs school buses are inspected three times each school year by SMCPs staff through a documented inspection process that is recorded in the Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration's (MVA) school bus inspection database. The first inspection is completed prior to the start of the school year. The interior of SMCPs school buses are also checked randomly throughout the school year.
- Additional information is found in the [SMCPs Recovery Plan](#).

## Clean and Healthy

- School buildings will be inspected and assessed each day before staff or students arrive to ensure all systems are functional and safe.
- Each site will be cleaned daily, with additional support being provided to specific areas as need arises, to ensure a safe and comfortable environment in which children can learn and achieve.
- Ventilation will remain at levels implemented beginning in March 2020, to provide increased air circulation and replacement.

- Additional information is found in the [SMCPS Recovery Plan](#).

## Food Services

- Food service offerings will return to pre-pandemic levels, with breakfast and lunch served at every school for students who are attending each day. Pre-pandemic processes for providing free, reduced, or paid meals are in place.
- Regional meal pickup sites will be established for students who may be learning from home, but who still want to receive school meals.

## Athletics and Extracurricular activities

- SMCPS will implement MPSSAA Athletic Programs
- Athletics will continue to implement traditional seasonal play beginning on August 10, 2022 with fall sports tryouts. Please refer to <https://www.smcps.org/dci/education-based-athletics> for additional information or contact your school's athletic director.
- St. Mary's County Public Schools support the philosophy that an education-based athletics program is vital to the positive social, physical, and educational development of students. The education-based athletics program enhances and supports the academic mission of the school system. We are committed to promoting the proper ideals of sportsmanship, ethical conduct, and fair play at all athletic contests. We support high standards of good citizenship and propriety, along with regard for the rights of others. Being a member of the interscholastic athletics program is a privilege to be earned and maintained throughout the season. Participants are expected to represent themselves, their families, their teams, and their schools in a responsible, sportsmanlike manner each time they enter a school, step onto the practice field, and/or participate in a game.