



# Southbridge Public Schools

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132 Torrey Road, Southbridge MA 01550

Telephone: (508) 764-5450

July 31, 2020

Dear Families,

I hope you are having a restful summer. I would like to share some general updates about planning for the 2020 - 2021 school year, in line with our promise to keep you frequently and promptly informed about the reopening of school.

There are two central guiding principles that we follow in planning for the upcoming school year. Those are 1) To develop a plan that is safe for our students and for all of our staff members and 2) To deliver the highest quality educational experience for students as possible. The health and safety of our learning community is paramount in all decisions related to reopening.

We recently shared that we have moved the first day of school from August 24 to September 8. This will allow extra time for additional professional development and teacher support that will be critical for the new school year. It will also allow us to be certain that our students have access to the Chromebooks and wi-fi hotspots that we have ordered before school begins. As you might imagine, these items are in high demand with districts throughout the country ordering in large volume. We are in regular contact with our vendors to make sure that these items arrive in time.

A similar increase in demand also exists for personal protective equipment and supplies such as hand sanitizer. We have placed an initial order for 26,000 medical masks, 25,000 pairs of gloves, 5,000 N95 masks, over 600 gallons of hand sanitizer, hand sanitizer dispensers, refills for the dispensers, eye protection, face shields, and disposable gowns. In the coming weeks we will update you on how these items will be used and specific policies and procedures to ensure the health and safety of our whole learning community in school buildings.

We have had a great response to our family surveys on the reopening of school. These surveys are important to support a safe and healthy school year and to understand how we can support your child's learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. Personnel from the district may reach out to some families to ask follow up questions about the new school year. You can also expect to see school district representatives in areas around town where people gather to ask you about reopening. Please take a moment to share your feedback.

Some families have indicated that they do not feel comfortable sending their children back to school in person due to concerns about COVID-19. In response, we would like to assure you that we intend to provide families with a remote learning option when school begins. We will provide you with information on how to request that option soon, along with more information about the upcoming school year.

**Family Welcome Center**

If you need to register a student who is new to the district, including incoming kindergarten students, you can still do so through the Family Welcome Center at 25 Cole Avenue. When you arrive, call (508) 764-5414 ext. 405 and provide your name and phone number. You will be directed to wait in your car until you receive a call to come into the building. Only one parent or guardian should enter. Please wear a mask and use hand sanitizer upon entering. If you don't have a mask, one will be offered to you onsite. If you have children with you, a staff member will come to your car with the paperwork. For a full description of our enrollment process and the required documentation, please see our website.

### **Communication During the Summer Break**

As a reminder, we are committed to providing you with updates as they become available. You will find announcements on our website, on our official social media accounts, and through other communication channels such as email and phone calls. If you would like to update your contact information, or confirm that we have the correct email address and phone number for your family, you can write to [help@southbridgepublic.org](mailto:help@southbridgepublic.org) or [ayuda@southbridgepublic.org](mailto:ayuda@southbridgepublic.org). You can also call or text (774) 601-0082 with updates to your contact information.

We are committed to providing students in Southbridge with rich opportunities for learning under any circumstance. Thank you for your patience and hard work during this unusual time.

Please have a safe and enjoyable summer.

Regards,

Jeffrey A. Villar, Ph.D.  
Receiver/Superintendent  
Southbridge Public Schools