

Southbridge Public Schools Reopening Plan

Summary of Plans for Families

August 17, 2020

This document will summarize the Southbridge Public Schools 2021 Reopening Plan document with important information for families. For more detailed information about the reopening plan or any of the topics below, you can refer to the full reopening plan document, available on our website. As always, if you have questions about the reopening plan or other aspects of your child's school experience, you can contact the student's building principal or send questions to help@southbridgepublic.org or ayuda@southbridgepublic.org

Overview

Southbridge Public Schools is planning a hybrid learning plan for grades 6 - 12, an in-person plan for grades K-5, and a Remote Learning Academy that parents of any grade-level student can select.

Here, we will summarize each part of this plan. Where appropriate, we provide the page number in the full-length reopening plan where you can look for more detailed information on a topic.

The first day of school has been moved from August 24th to September 14th, allowing added days for staff professional development totaling 14 days (calendar in Appendix C).

Attendance will be taken in each class and all course work will be graded, for both in-person and remote learning. All students who attend school will be assigned a Chromebook. Students in grades 6 to 12 will be expected to care for their Chromebook and bring it to and from school fully charged each day.

Safe mask breaks will be scheduled throughout the school day. Students will be instructed on safety procedures such as, how to safely wear a mask, physical distance, transition in the hallways, walk themselves safely to the bathroom, or the nurse.

The district will actively monitor data on the spread of COVID-19 in our community. Southbridge COVID-19 infection rates will be published each Wednesday on the district website. The Department of Public Health releases its Weekly COVID-19 Public Health Report that contains critical metrics for each municipality, including a color-coded indication of the levels of COVID-19 positives tests within a community over the past two week period. DESE has developed recommendations that the district will follow based on the community status. If conditions change and it is no longer safe to engage in the in-person elementary and hybrid secondary models presented in this plan, the district will shift to a complete remote learning model based completely

on the Remote Learning Academy.

Elementary School Students

For students in Pre-K through fifth grade, the district is providing an in-person model that runs five days a week, every week. For more detailed information about the elementary school format, see page 8 in the full reopening plan document, which is available on our website.

Students at the elementary level can opt for the remote learning option instead of the in-person model. All elementary students will be assigned a Chromebook. The Chromebooks will only be sent home if there is a need to shift to complete remote learning. All classrooms will adhere to 6' physical distancing. Each classroom is outfitted with either hand sanitizer and/or sinks with soap. All staff will be expected to wear masks. All students will be required to wear masks as well. Masks will be provided as needed.

Additionally, class size will be smaller, transitions to other areas will be limited, and increased movement breaks will be provided for students. Students may have opportunities for outside mask breaks, while adhering to physical distancing. These short periods of time will occur throughout the day.

Secondary School Students

Secondary students include middle and high school students in grades 6 through 12. Students at the secondary level will participate in a hybrid learning plan. Parents of secondary-level students can opt for the remote learning option (Remote Learning Academy) instead of the hybrid plan if they prefer.

Seeking to reduce the number of students in the classrooms, the hybrid model calls for students to attend in-person school two days per week and remote three days. Students are divided into two cohorts, Red House and White House. Whenever possible, siblings will be placed in the same color cohort.

In this model, 50% of students (in a cohort called "Red House") attend school on Monday and Tuesday and participate remotely Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday. The other 50% of students (in a cohort called "White House") attend school remotely Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday and attend in-person Thursday and Friday.

For more information about the secondary-level hybrid plan, please see page 9 in the full reopening plan document, which is available on our website.

Description of Remote Option

Remote instruction will be delivered through our Remote Learning Academy. This program will be an opt-in offering for parents who prefer to have their children work remotely from home 100% of

the time. Parents of students in all grade levels, kindergarten through twelfth grade, can choose this option.

The Remote Learning Academy will look different for students in elementary versus secondary grades. However, the consistency for each grade level includes: 1) students learning from home will follow a specific schedule and participate in virtual classes with their teacher and peers and, 2) students will complete academic assignments independently.

The Remote Learning Academy is also designed to support all students if/when COVID 19 circumstances require the school or district to close for in-person learning for all students. For more information about using Remote Learning Academy in the case of a full closure of school buildings, see page 32 of the full reopening plan document, which is on our website.

For a full description of the Remote Learning Academy, including access to technology and learning expectations, see page 9 of the full reopening plan document.

Special Education

Per guidelines from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), “school districts must provide a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) consistent with the need to protect the health and safety of students with disabilities and those individuals providing education, specialized instruction, and related services to students.” The guidelines prioritize in-person instruction as much as is possible for students with disabilities, particularly preschool-aged students and those with significant and complex needs while adhering to health and safety requirements.

For more specific information about special education, please see page 16 of the overall reopening plan document. To discuss your child’s special education needs specifically, please contact Deanna Martinez, Office Manager for Student Services at dmartinez@southbrigepublic.org or (508) 764-5414, extension 415.

Transportation

The number of students who are allowed to ride on a bus has been reduced to 24 students. This represents one third of the students who typically ride our buses. This change is to ensure there is enough spacing between students. Buses are also required to be cleaned daily and the windows will remain open unless weather does not permit it.

Change in Eastford Rd Start and End Times

The reduced number of students who can ride on a bus has caused the district to make changes in our busing schedule. Therefore, Eastford Road School will begin at 9:15 AM and will end at 4:00 PM. We realize that this change means students will be home much later than they are accustomed to, however the transportation provider was unable to add buses to accommodate

our needs and we then had to separate Eastford Rd School from the traditional elementary bus schedule.

Listed below is a summary of other aspects of the school reopening plan. For more detailed information about any aspect of this summary, please see the full reopening plan document that is available on our website. You can also send specific questions to help@southbridgepublic.org or ayuda@southbridgepublic.org.

- Southbridge has ordered approximately 1850 Chromebook computers and 400 WIFI hotspots (hotspots are reserved for families based on need).
- A three month supply of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) has been ordered including 26,000 medical masks, 5,000 N95 masks, 25,000 pairs of gloves, and over 648 gallons of hand sanitizer, among other items.
- Cleaning and disinfecting equipment and supplies will be made available to staff.
- Additional Staff has been added including:

A Health and Safety Registered Nurse Coordinator to lead the districts' health and safety procedures concerning Covid-19.

A technology support position was created to support families, students, and teachers as they learn to use new technology.

Custodial personnel to ensure cleaning and disinfecting will occur throughout the school day.

- Visitors to school buildings are not allowed except for the case of contracted service providers for special education services. A log of all visitors will be kept for 30 days.
- Breakfast and lunch will be held in classrooms, with six feet social distancing or physical barriers. Meals may also be served outside if conditions permit.
- Before the start of school, families will receive information about bus routes. See page 14 of the full district reopening plan for more details).
- Some students' school days could be impacted by transportation guidelines as school arrival and dismissal times might change.
- The reopening plan was created with thorough input from parents and staff. Please see page 24 of the full reopening plan for the results of our outreach efforts.

As always, if you have questions about school, you can reach out to help@southbridgepublic.org or ayuda@southbridgepublic.org.

