

# The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Public Schools

512 Cedar Street  
Scotch Plains, New Jersey 07076

Joan V. Mast, Ed.D.  
Superintendent of Schools

908-232-6161  
Ext. 4001 or 4002

August 2, 2020

Dear SPF Community,

We recognize how extensive the current disruptions are in every aspect of our lives. The unknown factors that surround this pandemic raise the stress level for all. We as adults know that we will get through this crisis. We need to continue to communicate optimism and hope to our children. Additionally, we must monitor their mental wellness and give them appropriate support. Thank you for continuing to work together as a community to support our students.

As my previous communications have shared, the administration and various district committees have all been planning with urgency through the summer months to prepare for a safe return to school for students and teachers. The guidance from the NJDOE requires districts to plan for 3 scenarios:

- A model where all are back in our buildings full time (not available at this time)
- A hybrid model
- An ALL on-line learning model

We will be sending out an additional survey in the coming days for families to make a choice for each of their children. The two options are the hybrid model or the on-line learning model. Parents can choose different models for each child based on individual needs. Students who participate in the fully on-line learning model will participate in the same classes as the students in the hybrid model, receiving the same instruction that is happening in the classroom and having opportunities to collaborate with other students virtually.

At this time, we have made significant progress in clarifying our hybrid model that includes scheduling siblings to attend school on the same day. The hybrid model uses a cohort structure to reduce the number of students in a classroom at any given time in order to maximize social distancing and to reduce the number of individuals with which any student or staff member comes into contact. This provides an additional level of safety and protection for all members of our community. As we assign students to their cohorts, we will be able to ensure that students from the same household are assigned to the same cohort so that they will be in school on the same days.

Elementary level students (Grades K-4) will be split into 2 groups for in-school rotation. When in school, students in the assigned group will have a single session schedule (4 hours of in-person instruction) in order to allow time to be transported home and have lunch. Once home, the learning day will continue for all students with ongoing, scheduled, differentiated instruction in order to provide a full day of learning.

- Group 1 has in person instruction at school on Mondays and Tuesdays and participates in all-day on-line learning on Thursdays and Fridays.
- Group 2 attends in person instruction at school on Thursdays and Fridays and participates all-day on-line learning on Mondays and Tuesdays.
- Groups 1 and 2 will be attending in-person instruction on alternating Wednesdays.

Middle school and high school students (Grades 5-12) will also be split into 2 groups. When in school, students will participate in a single-session schedule (4 hours of in-person instruction) in order to allow time to be transported home and have lunch. Once home, the learning day will continue for all students with additional, scheduled instruction in order to provide a full day of learning. All students, both those in school and at home will follow the same class schedule.

- Group 1 has in-person instruction at school on Mondays and Tuesdays and participates in all-day on-line learning on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays.
- Group 2 attends in-person instruction at school on Thursdays and Fridays and participates all-day on-line learning on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays.
- Whether students are participating in in-person instruction at school or on-line learning at home, they will be engaged with their regular class schedule, receiving instruction from their teacher and interacting with peers. All students will be engaged in their class schedule via on-line learning on Wednesdays.

Considering the number of students who will be moving throughout the school on any given day at the middle schools and the high school, providing Wednesday as an online learning day allows time for additional cleaning and air filtration.

Additional planning is happening in the areas of Special Education and Pre-K. Programs will be based on each child's IEP. We will be communicating more details this week.

Additionally, due to the need for social distancing busing is a significant safety consideration. Since students will attend school in cohorts each bus will transport fewer students. However, maximum social distancing will not be achievable. Therefore, students will be assigned seats and must follow strict bus rules including requirements for mask wearing and open windows for ventilation.

You will always retain the option to change your child's learning model. Specific dates will be published to change your child's schedule.

Additional updates will be forthcoming.

Sincerely,

Dr. Joan Mast  
Superintendent of the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Public Schools