

FAQs as of September 10, 2020

Ventilation

Q. What steps has the district taken to address ventilation/HVAC concerns?

A. Since March the district took additional steps in the maintenance care of the ventilation system. This included cleaning units, changing filters and changing settings to include more outside air.

- In reviewing our preparedness, the district reviewed the CDC considerations/recommendations and the ASHRAE epidemic taskforce guidance:
 - Increase the percentage of outdoor air (e.g., using economizer modes of HVAC operations) potentially as high as 100% (first verify compatibility with HVAC system capabilities for both temperature and humidity control as well as compatibility with outdoor/indoor air quality considerations).
 - Increase total airflow supply to occupied spaces, if possible.
 - Disable demand-control ventilation (DCV) controls that reduce air supply based on temperature or occupancy.
 - Consider using natural ventilation (i.e., opening windows if possible and safe to do so) to increase outdoor air dilution of indoor air when environmental conditions and building requirements allow.
- Improve central air filtration:
 - To as high as possible (MERV 13 or 14) without significantly diminishing design airflow.
 - Inspect filter housing and racks to ensure appropriate filter fit and check for ways to minimize filter bypass
 - Consider running the building ventilation system even during unoccupied times to maximize dilution ventilation.
 - Consider using portable high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) fan/filtration systems to help enhance air cleaning (especially in higher risk areas).
 - Ensure exhaust fans in restroom facilities are functional and operating at full capacity when the building is occupied.
 - Consider using ultraviolet germicidal irradiation (UVGI) as a supplement to help inactivate the virus

Ventilation

Q. Proper ventilation is one of the top things needed to create a safe indoor environment. Why was this not addressed for the hybrid option?

A. The district did address ventilation in the hybrid model but we did not consider an outside audit to verify that all systems are working efficiently to filter pathogens and provide fresh air exchanges. The Governor gave us the opportunity to address these concerns by giving Districts the option to delay the opening.

- As we learned more about how the virus was spread through both droplets and aerosols, we developed more questions that moved us beyond the typical maintenance of our systems, such as:
 - What is the air exchange rate in each room?
 - In rooms without air conditioning what should be our practice of using fans?
 - Based on outside conditions, is opening windows an adequate approach to bringing in more fresh air?
 - Knowing that the virus is present in sewage, what are the extra precautions we are utilizing in bathrooms? Are all bathroom units ventilated?
 - Does air from one classroom move to other classrooms based on a shared HVAC unit? Is the air treated or mixed with outside air before it circulates?
 - Does every Univent work at the same level of efficiency?
 - In rooms that recirculate the air how is fresh air introduced?
 - If employees are working in their own office, do they need to wear a mask? Why or Why not?
- While recognizing the importance of air quality and having ongoing concerns, when the Governor provided additional time to open, in order to address safety concerns the Superintendent made the recommendation to begin the year all virtually.

Q. If the HVAC system was not sufficient to filter out the Covid-19 particles, why were parents not told this prior to being asked to make a decision to place our children in school through the hybrid method?

A. The ventilation system was addressed in our Restart Plan. We did raise many questions around the operations of our systems. We knew that they have been maintained with the highest filtration possible. We would continue to work towards making it as safe as possible. Knowing that we could not have MERV 13 filtration we are now able to identify other remediation. There are actions that can be taken to be put in place to compensate for not having MERV 13 filters. When the Governor provided the option for schools to move towards full-remote learning, given a rationale around safety concerns, the district took the opportunity to do a more thorough review of district.

Ventilation

Q. Why was so much money spent on the field lighting when it had go towards the HVAC system upgrade?

A. The money for the field lights had been allocated in the budget that was developed before the shutdown in March 2020, and the field light project had been discussed by the Board and the public for years. The District does not have “slush money,” and no funds required for re-opening the schools were instead directed to the field lights. Any necessary HVAC upgrades or facility changes will be addressed within the Board’s existing budget and/or any supplemental COVID-related funding.

Q. Why could medical personnel and facilities be prepared while educators and schools needed more time?

A. The district can learn a lot from hospitals and what they have done to put safety precautions in place. Still, schools are very different environments. We have teachers in classrooms with students up to four hours and/or with four different groups of students for approximately one hour each. Our concern is how to ensure that our ventilation system is filtering and exchanging air with fresh air for all those who are in the room for a prolonged period of time.

Q. If the Governor hadn’t made that statement, would the school board be okay with opening school with HVAC concerns?

A. The Governor changed the executive order and permitted Districts to move to all virtual if there were safety concerns. Although we had reviewed our systems internally regarding the changing of filters, the quality of filters and the settings, we could not assure that this would filter out pathogens.

- We now have the opportunity to have a professional review of our systems so we can move with confidence towards the safe opening of schools.

Q. What is being done to install air conditioning in classrooms at Evergreen? If children are required to wear masks when we return to school, doing so in an extremely hot classroom is not healthy for anyone.

A. This is part of the long-range facilities plan for all schools that are lacking air conditioning, it will not be possible to provide air conditioning in all spaces before reopening.

Ventilation

Q. Your letter states that our schools meet the state requirements for opening in regards to the current ventilation system. Has the state approved your decision to start all virtually even though we meet the state's requirements for in person instruction?

A. The state has accepted our request for going to our virtual model. The state reviews our plan for completion. When we get back the information from the engineers and the environmental hygienist, we will provide a more specific timeline for the return to school.

Q. Do you have a proposal from a company that handles HVAC work as to how long it will take to get all schools up to date? What is the proposed timeline?

A. The district is currently in the process of having engineers and environmental hygienists evaluate all of our systems. The district has contracted with EI Associates to conduct evaluations of existing air handlers, unit ventilators, exhaust/relief air systems and cabinet unit heaters. Additionally, the district will partner with Environmental Safety Management Corp to conduct air quality evaluations. The intention is to improve indoor air quality through mechanical system adjustments, filtration improvements, and the possible installation of UV and Needlepoint Bipolar Ionization technology. Additionally, air purification systems with HEPA filters will be installed in needed locations. The contractors are aware that the district wants the needed remediations to be completed as soon as possible.

Timeline:

- August/September Evaluation
- September Recommendations
- October Implementation of Remediations

Q. Which schools are up to date with their HVAC system and which schools are not?

A. We are conducting this assessment in all of our schools now. We will give ongoing updates at bi-monthly BOE meetings.

Ventilation

Q. Based on that, is it possible to have a hybrid schedule begin before the 2nd marking period?

A. The district will return to the hybrid model as soon as the review of the ventilation/HVAC systems are completed, the changes are made and we have confirmation that it is safe to return.

Q. Can the district afford the improvements at this time, and if not, what is the plan for affording them? Have bids been solicited?

A. We can make the most critical improvements now and plan for future improvements in our long-range planning. We have not engaged in work that requires the bidding process at this time.

Q. What was the \$5500 from the Office of Emergency Management budget spent on back in May?

The district hired a consultant to support the district in creating safety protocols. The \$5500 was set aside for hourly consultation. This consultant performed the following and was compensated for these many hours at this rate.

A The district hired a consultant to support with protocols related to COVID-19. Mr. Dennis Vanetta was asked to assist with safety and security protocols within the district at the rate of \$55 per hour at an estimated maximum of \$5,500 through August. The SPF Restart Plan document was distributed in an email from Dr. Mast on August 7, 2020.

Q. Did you speak with the Superintendents for Westfield and Summit about their reopening plans? What HVAC filters do they have? They do not and will not be getting MERV 13 filters.

A. Dr. Mast attends roundtables with Superintendents from around Union County, however the decisions of other Districts are not part of our district's decision-making framework. The decisions for how the schools within Scotch Plains-Fanwood are operated is a local district decision based on guidelines from NJDOE.

Q. Can we simply open windows for ventilation and/or purchase air purifiers for classrooms?

A. The district is supplying air purifiers for some locations, such as those spaces with no windows. Opening windows is dependent on weather conditions and allergy considerations.

Ventilation

Q. Have you explored outdoor learning? All the new students in town and the kindergartners, 1st graders etc. would greatly benefit from this. And everyone can benefit from this with human interaction.

A. Schools will be providing some opportunities to bring students together outside. It is not possible to move school outdoors for security reasons.

Q. If one school is deemed safe with the HVAC and another is not, is it an all or nothing for the district to return to school? Or can the HS return for example even if Terrill or Park is not deemed safe?

A. The district will determine the sequence of school openings when we have more information.

Instruction

Q. I understand that the school is aiming for a full reopening date of 11/20/2020. Assuming that you are able to do so, will virtual learning still be made available for students who have underlying health conditions that would make them vulnerable to COVID or do not feel ready to go back to school in person?

A. Virtual learning will continue to be an option as per the New Jersey Department of Education.

Q. If a high school student needing to take SAT Tests lives in a household with a vulnerable family member, can any arrangements be made to further reduce risks during SAT exams for this student?

A. We are practicing extreme social distancing with the September SAT in well ventilated rooms with windows and individual HVAC systems. These rooms will also utilize fans for circulation and will have air purifiers. Students will be in test rooms no bigger than ten students and one examiner. Some rooms may be less than ten students. As the SAT is on a Saturday, staffing is voluntary and there are no guarantees to create a 1:1 testing environment.

Instruction

Q. For the anticipated re-opening on November 20, are we expecting this to be a hybrid model or are we expecting all students to be able to attend in person?

A. If the data is as it is in September, it would be the hybrid model.

Q. Will teachers be teaching virtually from their classrooms or home?

A. Most teachers will be teaching from their classrooms.

Q. What was done during the summer to prepare for the initial hybrid reopening?

A. Instructional frameworks were created, professional development was provided. Safety protocols were identified. Please see our restart plan.

Q. What type of virtual learning will take place in the Fall? Pre-recorded videos or live synchronous teaching? Will there be minimum requirements regarding live student engagement? Will teachers be required to teach a full day and engage students daily with regular lessons?

A. The instructional framework developed for both virtual and hybrid models includes an expectation of live synchronous instruction during each instructional period of the day. Teachers will remain available throughout the instructional period.

Q. Are there any plans to introduce more app-based learning? Example: GoMath, math edge, epic, Ebook where school-based subscription is must for students to use.

A. The district is implementing some new learning platforms and apps in specific grades and courses and looks forward to engaging students in an enhanced Google Classroom experience with a district-wide upgrade to G Suite Enterprise for Education. New apps will continue to be evaluated and implemented in an on-going cycle of assessment, planning, implementation and evaluation.

Instruction

Q. What does the online class look like? is there a specific program to be used? or it is going to be only live meetings?

A. The Instructional framework developed for both virtual and hybrid models includes use of Google Classroom and the upgraded G Suite for Education. A combination of live instruction, guided/independent practice and other activities as well as on-going formative assessment will be used throughout.

Q. Will parents have an “analog” option for home learning? My kindergartener doesn’t have a great attention span on the computer and I would like to be able to follow the district’s curriculum without subjecting her to a lot more screen time than she is accustomed to.

A. The instructional models that will be followed by teachers are based on a combination of live instruction, guided/independent practice and other activities as well as on-going formative assessment. Screen breaks are built into the program throughout the day. Kindergarten students will be using a platform called Seesaw, which is designed for early learning.

Q. Will the virtual learning now actually reflect an actual school day, versus a small instructional that was no more than an hour?

A. The day will more closely reflect a traditional school day and will provide for a smooth transition from virtual to hybrid to 100% in person teaching and learning as the year progresses and it becomes safe to move to the next phase. All students are expected to be engaged throughout the day with live instruction, guided practice and interaction with teachers and other staff.

Instruction

Q. This is regarding gen ed students. Considering the district admitted deficit from the Spring, how will we deal with and manage this deficit. Additionally, how will the district guarantee that our students not experience further slippage due to virtual learning? Additionally, will teachers be evaluated by their supervisors during virtual learning?

A. Content-area Supervisors have closely studied the degree to which grade-level and course-specific content was covered during the spring and are leading teachers to develop common lessons for students as the new school year gets underway. We are also applying what we know from research on “summer slide” to help guide this work.

- Teacher Evaluation processes and procedures are driven, in large part, by the TEACHNJ Act. The district is awaiting guidance from the New Jersey Department of Education on protocols for conducting virtual observations. The Administration will again regularly review google classrooms to ensure that these are well organized and easy to navigate, take into account the social and emotional needs of students as well as their academic development and encourage and support student participation.

Q. What are the expectations of the aides within the classroom other than just a spectator?

A. The primary role of our aides is to assist the teacher in all facets of instruction and student learning. Aides are being provided with specific training on how to support virtual learning.

Q. What controls and check-ins will there be with students, teachers and/or parents to get feedback on the effectiveness of the fall learning plans and student engagement?

A. Concerns should be addressed to teachers directly and if unresolved to the Principal. The District will assess and revise its plans as necessary and based on feedback from staff, students and families.

Q. Do our previous rubrics still apply or have expectations declined?

A. Our expectations have not declined. Through a process of formative assessment, we will continue to work towards meeting and exceeding the standards identified by the New Jersey Department of Education and individual students’ learning goals. As always, we will “take stock” of where current work is in relation to each standard/goal and determine the best differentiated action to move every student towards the standard/goal.

Instruction

Q. This is the first-year block scheduling was supposed to be introduced in the High school. What are the expectations for High School students/teachers during an 80-minute online class?

A. The blocks will not be 80 minutes in length during remote or hybrid learning. We will utilize 65-minute blocks for remote classes. Various activities will take place during this time. The teacher will be live the entire 65 minutes.

Q. What are the extra considerations being given to ensure proper instruction in AP and accelerated classes?

A. The District is working hard to develop and implement lesson plans that are engaging and purposeful. The teachers will be live during their classes and that we, as a district, have put into place clear expectations for teacher professionalism in the virtual setting.

Q. How will driver's education be handled?

A. The county Superintendent's office has not received the Driver's Ed materials from the DMV. They are expected to receive the materials mid-late September. As per the DMV, the test needs to be administered live-in person with a DMV certified instructor so we have postponed Driver's Ed to hopefully to the second marking period, if we are on a hybrid. If we are still all virtual, Driver's Ed will move to the third marking period.

Q. How will the PSAT be administered to sophomores?

A. We will not be testing 10th graders for the PSAT this year. When scores are released by the College Board, we will provide copies of the test to all 10th grade students. Teachers in the Math and English departments will have access to use these tests in their instruction as well.

Q. Who will help my child with college applications, letters of recommendation, etc.?

A. Families should reach out to your assigned guidance counselor.

Instruction

Q. What is going to happen with the High School Lab classes?

A. Teachers will be able to assign virtual simulations for students to engage with investigation and explore how manipulating variables affects the outcome. Teachers will also be able to do demos and provide videos from which data can be extracted and analyzed by students. While not hands-on, it will be conceptual in its approach with the students acquiring the same concepts as if it were a live lab.

Q. How will extra-curricular clubs take place?

A. Further information regarding all co-curricular activities will be forthcoming from the individual schools.

Q. What is going to be done for freshman orientation at the HS and what consideration will you be giving to incoming 9th graders and them having an opportunity to meet teachers and transition appropriately to HS?

A. A Virtual Orientation program for all 9th graders was held on September 3rd. The recording is available on the high school website.

Q. Will the class bell schedule for the high school be the same as the published hybrid schedule? If so, what is the format of the afternoon “online learning” that was scheduled for 90 minutes after lunch?

A. In order to accommodate the students attending the Union County Vocational and Technical Schools’ Shared Time Programs, the high school schedule has been revised.

Q. For our younger students, what is the expectation for their “Screen Time”?

A. The Instructional Model has been developed to account for appropriate screen time and to build the independence of young learners. Students will not be expected to be on the screen all day long - teachers will provide time for independent work and screen breaks throughout the day. Pre-K and Kindergarten students and parents will be introduced to a new learning app called Seesaw that will help teachers facilitate learning.

Instruction

Q. What will the virtual schedule look like for kindergarten? Will the kindergarteners be expected to be remote learning in real-time from 8:35-11:50 and again from 2:00-3:00?

A. Each day will begin with a morning meeting to preview the day's schedule, communicate expectations, build a classroom community and incorporate social-emotional learning. Afterwards students will be led through a series of lessons that will include live whole group instruction and a variety of independent, partner or small group work facilitated by the teacher. Pre-K and Kindergarten students and parents will be introduced to a new learning app called Seesaw that will help teachers facilitate learning.

Q. Many parents are trying to put together learning pods to allow for socialization of their children, and shared workload across the parents. I don't see how this will work unless the children are in the same class. When will the class rosters be released so that parents have time to meet each other to discuss if this is a viable option?

A. The teacher cannot release rosters or class lists. Teacher assignments and class schedules will be released as they are completed. Typically, the PTA works with each class to create class lists.

Q. With the potential of attending remote schooling for a long time and the impaired ability to make friends, can you keep the different groups together as the kids progress from kindergarten to first grade instead of mixing them and pulling them apart from their friends?

A. Scheduling and rostering of students is a complex process that is designed to meet the learning needs of all students. All rosters have been designed for consistency regardless of virtual, hybrid and in-person phases.

Q. How involved do parents need to be in virtual learning?

A. Parents and caregivers can support virtual learning by

- Establishing routines and expectations and reinforcing protocols explained by teachers
- Choosing and setting up a space for learning for each child/young person
- Staying in touch with teachers and counselors
- Helping children/young people own their own learning
- Beginning and ending each day by checking in with the children/young people in their care.

Instruction

Q. The town hall indicated that teachers will be available for the full classroom time. What is the expectation for students, particularly young learners like kindergarteners (who may not even be able to read), to be available during the full class day and attentive to a screen during that period?

A. The Instructional Model has been developed to account for appropriate screen time and to build the independence of young learners. Students will not be expected to be on the screen all day long - teachers will provide time for independent work and screen breaks throughout the day.

Q. When school does reopen if there are requirements that classes need to be smaller how would you accommodate that in regards to space, teacher and staff? Do you plan on hiring more teachers?

A. All class rosters have been designed for consistency regardless of virtual, hybrid and in-person phases.

Q. With the change of start date will the year get extended or do we lose vacation days? Also, does every child start virtual regardless of what we selected?

A. Vacation Days have not been impacted due to the change in calendar. All students will begin with the all remote virtual model.

Q. The daily gym class was a missing activity since the school closed in March. I believe it could be possible to have outdoor gym classes 2 hours at least twice a week. I think it would be safe and good physically and emotionally to have this class on for the students.

A. Students will be scheduled for Health and Physical Education classes as if schools were open and Health/PE Teachers will provide instruction.

Instruction

Q. Is it safe to assume that the virtual learning will mirror a physical in class day? Meaning if a student has Math at 8:15 then they are expected to be on line by 8:15 for a live class with the teacher and fellow students?

A. Each grade level (PK-4, 5, 6-8, 9-12) will follow a schedule that mirrors a day of in-person learning as closely as possible. Some modifications were necessary to allow for transition to the hybrid model to account for transportation.

Q. Are all classes going to have required daily live instructions?

A. Yes.

Q. What are the virtual STAR and physical education classes going to look like?

A. These classes will be held live using the same instructional model in place for all other classes.

Q. Will we be following a normal full session day schedule as opposed to single session days?

A. A special schedule has been created for the virtual/hybrid school days that closely mirrors the typical schedule and allows for ease of transition between models.

Q. Can you provide details on how you came up with the start date of 11/20/20? What is the timeline of the work that is going to be done between now and 11/20/20? We know of many other larger school Districts than ours that have start dates in October or beginning of November. This is the latest start time I have seen at this point.

A. November 20 is the beginning of our marking period however, we will open sooner if it is safe, based on the study with our outside experts.

Q. What days will kids be giving back since school now started two days later?

A. The calendar has been revised to reflect that November 3, 2020 will be a school day for students. The other Professional Development Day was reassigned from the end of the school year and does not impact the student schedule.

Instruction

Q. In our most recent letter from Dr. Mast, it looks like the DOE has a full reopening in their sights for Nov. 20, less than 4 months from now. Does this mean a full day, 5 days a week schedule or all students?

A. Based on guidance from Health officials at that time, the District may use the hybrid model that is part of the District reopening plan in an effort to phase back to 100% in person learning.

Q. If you're not looking at a full reopening, will we be returning to the same hybrid/virtual options we saw a few weeks ago?

A. Based on guidance from Health officials at the specific time concerned, the district may use the hybrid model as a step towards full reopening.

Q. I understand the decision is to go all virtual but can there be something organized for the kids to at least get to meet their teachers in person at least once - even outdoors for an hour? I think especially for kids 5th grade and younger, it is important for them to meet their teacher in person.

A. Schools are currently holding various "meet and greets" as well as supply distributions during which students may be able to meet teachers and other staff members.

Instruction

Q. The daily gym class was a missing activity since the school closed in March. I believe it could be possible to have outdoor gym classes 2 hours at least twice a week? I think it would be safe and good physically and emotionally to have this class on for the students.

A. A big challenge with PE is that the teacher would need to have activities that can be done outside or inside in a small space. Not all students will be able to access the Internet from outside their home and may need to stay inside to participate. Students may have limited access to equipment.

- For Elementary students:
 - The teacher will begin the lesson with warm up activities the student can do inside (stretching, jumping jacks, marching, etc). This will be followed with a mini lesson explaining and modeling a skill. For example, the skill may be throwing an item up with one hand and catching it in the other. This will be modeled. The students can use a small ball or a stuffed animal to practice. The skill could progress to doing this while walking, marching in place, jumping, standing on one foot, etc.
 - There are also many GoNoodle videos to teach skills. The PE teacher can explain and model and then have all students complete the activity while watching the GoNoodle video on the Google Meet.
- At the Middle School level, PE will emphasize individual fitness: strength, cardio, flexibility and mobility, mindfulness, and dance.
- At the HS Level for the Fall:
 - Each class will have specific assignments on a daily basis as per the schedule. General PE, High Performance PE, Advanced Weight Training, and Personal Wellness will operate as close to the live instruction that students have been accustomed to. Health classes will also run - for this Fall - 9th Grade Health will be in Marking Period 1 due to limitations and restrictions from the Department of Motor Vehicles.
 - We anticipate warm up activities, walking, running, and body resistance fitness to dominate the Physical Education Model for Virtual instruction with the teacher and students during the class period on google meet.

Instruction

Q. Given the plan to go all remote and parents of young children will need to be more involved and really sit and teach their children, I implore you to please provide lesson plans a week at a time. This will really help in balancing school work for multiple kids along with my job along with my youngest who will be 2. Parents are going to have to be more hands on and being able to plan, prepare and be flexible will really help this crazy time. The lesson plans don't need to be super detailed and of course can and will change. but this is really important for all of us to be successful this year.

A. Our new Virtual Learning Instructional Models call for live instruction for each period or block.

Q. How will attendance be taken? Will teachers take attendance for each period?

A. Attendance will be taken and recorded by teachers for each class.

Q. Will teachers be required to deliver live remote classes from their classrooms following normal full session day schedule?

A. To assist in the transition from virtual to hybrid, special daily schedules have been developed that mirror a full day schedule with a shared lunch break for all.

Q. Will students be required to be logged on for live classes following normal full session day schedule?

A. Yes

Q. My child has their own computer, I understand that iPads will be the required device for at home learning. How does the district expect the students in these grades to work off of an iPad to complete school work? Additionally, viewing a small iPad screen all day every day is not good for their vision.

A. The district is providing a device for every student in the district, since having a common platform makes instruction more efficient. Teachers will base student instructions on the device that students have been provided.

Instruction

Q. If assignments are due, is the expectation to complete the assignment using the iPad and submit it there as well? Example- a report is due and by child uses Microsoft Word to complete. Will Pages be the only acceptable format?

A. Teachers will base their instructions on the device that students are provided. A common platform will make instruction more efficient. Outside of instructional time, students may choose to use other devices.

Q. In a virtual environment, how will teachers be effective in motivating our students?

A. We have developed a series of Social and Emotional Learning lessons for the first 20 days that will allow teachers and students to develop strong social connections.

Q. Is there the possibility to have the real time instruction condensed to a shorter amount of time followed by assignments or recorded sessions to allow some flexibility for working parents?

A. Families with special circumstances should contact their school's Principal.

Q. Will teachers be supplying the parents with the topics/assignments being covered each week, so we can easily follow up with our children regarding their school work?

A. Assignments will be posted in Google Classrooms.

Q. Is band going to continue virtually?

A. Instrumental Lessons and Band will continue virtually.

Q. Will homework be given and will it be different from finishing up class work?

A. This will vary by grade level and class. Homework may be assigned to reinforce lessons or prepare for upcoming classroom learning activities.

Instruction

Q. Are the children going to receive text books or rely entirely on E-books?

A. Class materials such as textbooks and journals will be provided to all students via a touchless pick-up process.

Q. If a student is not comfortable with a camera on, can they turn it off?

A. Parents should reach out to their child's teacher in such instances.

Q. Is Quest still taking place this year? How will it be implemented?

A. Yes, each grade level's QUEST class will be held virtually and will be scheduled once per 6-day cycle at the middle schools.

Q. For the anticipated re-opening on November 20, will there be another opportunity to accept or decline busing if we are bus-eligible?

A. If you are eligible for the bus, bus routes will be in place when schools reopen.

Q. What supports will be available if students are engaging in school refusal. I hear that the format has changed which will hopefully help. Any tips for parents to help engage resistant children.

A. Parents with such a concern should reach out to the student's Counselor (Grades 5-12), Student Assistance Specialist (Grades PK-4) or Case Manager.

Assessments

Q. For our young learners, what is the expectation? Will our students be performing at expected grade levels by the end of year?

A. Our expectation is that through summer curriculum work and formative assessments at the start of the school year, we will meet students "where they are" and move them towards meeting grade level standards and individual learning goals in all grades and courses.

Assessments

Q. Will there be standardized testing and/or what is a measure of accountability for the educators?

A. We are waiting for guidance from the NJ Department of Education on whether there will be state assessments this year.

Q. People interested in moving to Scotch Plains review these scores that “grade” towns in NJ. What if our grade goes down when other schools maintained theirs from hybrid learning?

A. As we do each year, we study student outcomes and achievement very closely in order to adjust our curriculum, instructional practices, revise and/or select new materials and design assessment practices accordingly.

Q. How will the teachers be assessing each student?

A. As always, we will use a process of formative assessment that will allow us to “take stock” of where current work is in relation to the goal and determine the best differentiated action to move every student to the goal.

Q. With no standardized tests last year and no idea how long the duration or how successful virtual/hybrid will be this year, what are the critical success factors and metrics being defined to ensure this approach is effective? And if it isn’t successful, what will that look like? How do we ensure our children don’t fall further behind?

A. Content-area Supervisors have closely studied the degree to which grade-level and course-specific content was covered during the spring and are leading teachers to develop common lessons for students as the new school year gets underway. We are also applying what we know from research on “summer slide” to help guide this work. Supervisors will be monitoring progress towards reaching course proficiencies and adjusting pacing as needed.

Q. What do schools plan to do for evaluating students' academic progress?

A. As always, we will use a process of formative assessment that will allow us to “take stock” of where current work is in relation to curricular goals and determine the best differentiated action to move every student to the goal.

Assessments

Q. How will you be assessing students...specifically first graders reading levels etc.? Usually it's a DRA...will you be able to do that virtually?

A. For assessing growth in reading, we will be administering running records virtually to all students to determine reading levels.

Q. How will assessments of students take place? Testing and quizzes? How will grading occur? Since every child is different, how will we ensure that we continue to assess the development of our children in elementary school?

A. At all grade levels, teachers will utilize formative assessments to plan for instruction and to meet student needs as they always have. When necessary and for the purpose of assessing students' progress towards meeting state standards and course proficiencies, tests and quizzes will be implemented virtually.

Communication

Q. How can parents' voices be heard and considered?

A. We will continue to communicate with parents to move towards the opening of school when we know that we have maximized the safety of our students and staff. The district receives communication via email, phone and also during the public session. Those communications are reviewed and considered, but that does not always translate to implementation. In addition, the ad-hoc District Restart Committee was composed of parents from the community who actively participated. Updates will be given at bi-monthly Board meetings. These meetings are available to the public.

Q. Can we request weekly status updates from the BOE? These should be available to all residents, not just parents of school children.

A. We will give updates at bi-monthly Board meetings. These meetings are available to the public.

Communication

Q. When is Back to school night?

A. Back to School Nights are scheduled for the following dates:

- September 22 - Elementary Schools
- September 24 - Middle Schools
- September 29 - High School

Q. Why did it take so long for the district to survey parents, have outreach, have a town hall meeting?

A. We have been planning since March. When schools went remote the district maintenance department used the opportunity to deep clean and address other building projects. Administrators administered surveys in the spring to best understand what was needed to analyze remote learning and learn from our initial implementation.

Technology

Q. In your letter you state that the extra 4 days “will help us to ensure that all students are equitably equipped with the technology they need to participate in the enhanced model of virtual instruction that we will provide.”

- What is the expected date of distribution for these devices to students/parents?
- If there is no expected date of distribution, have the tablets and Chromebook been ordered, are they in stock from your provider, and when is the expected date of delivery?

A. Tech delivery is underway. You should contact your school for further updates.

Q. If the cases for the iPads are delayed, (which have the keyboard attached), can I get the model number to order one for my child?

A. The cases are all in one. These are the cases we ordered. <https://www.logitech.com/en-us/product/ruggedcombo2?cid=1822>

Technology

Q. Could you please let us know if filters are provided with the iPads and Chromebooks, and do we know how much screen time is safe?

A. The content filter for all of our devices is Cisco Umbrella. Our instructional models have been designed to provide screen breaks throughout the instructional day and within lessons.

Q. In regards to devices being given to students – what are the devices that will be given out?

A. Distribution is currently going on the week of 9/8/20.

- PreK students will receive iPads with soft cases
- Kindergarten students will receive iPads with hard cases* and keyboards
- Grades 1 through 4 will receive Chromebooks
- Grades 5 through 11 will receive iPads with hard cases* and keyboards
- Grade 12 will receive MacBook Airs

Q. Who do we contact if district provided device has issues during a school day?

A. Please let your student's teacher know and they will put in a tech ticket

Q. How and when will technology skills be taught?

A. A series of intentional technology lessons have been developed and will be implemented sequentially/as needed within the first weeks of school.

Sports

Q. HS Sports are going forward since they are outside - to my daughter's delight, and there are a lot of questions of how it will work. Can you reflect on how the transportation will work to and from games? Has there been thought of only practicing during the week and having a tournament style Saturday at a regional location that parents drive their children to? Play two or three games in a set location, pull regional schools together?

A. Transportation to and from games will be the same as years past except students will be required to wear masks, face front, and not eat during bus rides. Capacity limits set by the NJ DOE and NJ DOT will be observed and if we need more buses than usual, we will arrange that.

- Playing multiple teams on one site does create additional COVID Tracing concerns that are limited by playing one team at one site. Games are targeted to be during the week to leave weekends for practices – if possible.

Q. Is SPF still committed to move forward with outdoor fall sports? Will practices be after the virtual school day at the high school fields?

A. Fall sports will start on 9/14 – live practices and games at the allotted BOE facilities.