

From: Curley, Jeff

Date: Wed, Sep 23, 2020 at 2:30 PM

Subject: City-SPS reopening town hall slides

To: McLaughlin, Matthew

Hi Matt, here's the Town Hall presentation from Monday. Susana Morgan has drafted the following message for families summarizing the reopening situation, which should be sent out tomorrow once the slides are posted. Please let me know if you or other counselors have any questions. Best, Jeff 202-251-8670

Dear Somerville Public Schools Parents, Guardians and Staff:

As many of you are aware, Monday night the City and the District co-hosted a Virtual Town Hall to update families on the efforts that have been under way for several months to prepare for an eventual gradual return to our school buildings. The primary focus of Monday's Town Hall were updates on the school building ventilation and filtration assessment work as well as the virus surveillance testing planning. We appreciate the intense work and the collaborative approach to establishing both of these critical safety measures as part of Somerville's comprehensive plan to ensure a safe and sustainable return to our school buildings while still in the midst of a pandemic.

The city contracted the services of Fitzmeyer and Tocci Associates to conduct a review of the air ventilation and filtration systems within our school buildings to assess the risk level using ASHRAE (American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers) guidelines for aerosol spread prevention. School buildings would need to achieve an ASHRAE Low Risk assessment score (between 1.00 and 1.99) before being cleared to reopen.

Based on the consultant's initial high level audit, we anticipate that December 1st is the first possible date that we would be able to start transitioning to hybrid in-person instruction as work on our school buildings is completed. Once we start transitioning to hybrid in-person instruction with our prioritized student populations, we will continue to work towards a safe and sustainable reopening of schools for all students following the phased approach detailed in our reopening plan.

Their initial audit included identification of all potential improvements required to bring a school to within the Low Risk level. It was also determined that in addition to the original Somerville High School building, it would not be feasible to make the necessary ventilation improvements at the Edgerly (Next Wave/Full Circle) or the Brown School to bring them to within the ASHRAE Low Risk Level required at this time to clear the buildings for reopening.

We will be looking at alternative temporary spaces for Brown School and Next Wave/Full Circle students for when we begin transitioning to in-person instruction while mitigation work continues in those schools. We hope to have more specific information about the work that will be conducted at every school and the anticipated timeline for that work over the next few weeks.

Information about plans for routine COVID-19 testing and contact tracing were also presented at Monday night's meeting. The city is contracting with the Broad Institute and a third-party provider on a full-service testing plan. In addition, with the City's support, the Board of Health is actively working to issue an order mandating the seasonal flu vaccine and COVID-19 testing protocol for all students and staff. We will share additional information and details as they become available. A video of the Town Hall event and slides presented during that meeting will be posted at www.somervillema.gov/virtualtownhall.

We recognize how frustrating and challenging this process has been for families. Working with our colleagues in other city departments, we are doing everything we can to put systems in place that prioritize the health and safety of our students, families, and staff – and moving as quickly as we can on these very complex structures. We will continue to keep you informed as the work progresses. The City and District will hold additional Virtual Town Halls on school reopening progress in October and November.

I cannot thank you enough for your commitment to our students. The first few days of the school year have gone well, as has the introduction of the outdoor enrichment programming offered by Community Schools and Parks & Recreation. We will continue to work diligently to provide all of our students with a rich learning experience and the supports they need.

Respectfully,

Mary Skipper, Superintendent