



SUFFOLK PUBLIC SCHOOLS



Dr. John B. Gordon III, Superintendent

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February 12, 2021

Dear SPS Family:

I want to first take this time to thank all of our students, teachers, parents, and others for your dedication, commitment and support of Suffolk Public Schools during the COVID-19 pandemic and what we now know as our “our new normal.” On February 5, 2021, Governor Northam called on all K-12 school divisions in the Commonwealth to make in-person learning options available by March 15, 2021.

This announcement has posed many questions from our school community. At our School Board meeting on Thursday, February 11, the board voted to approve the Educate and Innovate learning plan to begin face-to-face instruction in the hybrid setting for students, and as promised, I want to provide you with an update on how face-to-face instruction in this setting will look for SPS. PreK-5th grade (Elementary) students who choose to return in a hybrid setting will return on March 15, 2021 and students in 6th-12th grade who have also chosen to return in a hybrid setting will return on March 22, 2021. Our students in specialized programs will return to four days a week beginning March 15, 2021.

Earlier in the year, SPS gave parents the option to decide if they wanted their child(ren) to return in a face-to-face setting, or to remain virtual. However, as the pandemic continues, we want to give you the option to change your learning model preference. **You will receive a link to the survey to change your selected learning format on Tuesday, February 16.** If you do not receive an email containing the link, or if you prefer to receive a hard-copy of the survey in the mail, please contact your child’s school directly. As a reminder, any parents who do not complete the survey will default to the hybrid option. If you do not wish to change your original selection from the Fall survey, you do not need to complete another survey.

If you choose to opt for your child to attend any Suffolk Public School in a Hybrid learning environment, you MUST complete a Parent Acknowledgement form. The form must be returned to the school BEFORE your child attends for in-person learning. The Parent

Acknowledgement form will be included with the learning format change survey. You may also find a link to the form on our SPS website.

Parents please keep in mind that immunization requirements have not been waived during the pandemic. All 7th grade students who plan to return to any Suffolk Public Schools building for face-to-face instruction must have a TDAP record on file or proof of a medical or religious exemption before entering into the hybrid learning model. If your child is unable to receive the vaccine before March 22, 2021, they will need to remain in a virtual learning setting.

Please contact the school nurse if your child requires medication during the school day, so arrangements can be made.

Hybrid vs. Virtual

To eliminate confusion, please understand the difference between Hybrid and Virtual learning. Hybrid learning is where students learn through a mix of hybrid and online activities. In this model, students attend school 2 days a week and complete work at home on the remaining 3 days. Virtual learning is where students learn through live virtual instruction 4 days a week. Friday is designated as an independent virtual learning day for all students.

Virtual Instruction Model

All virtual students (elementary and secondary) will log in daily, Monday-Thursday, for live instruction. Friday will be an independent virtual learning day.

Hybrid Instruction Model

Elementary Hybrid students will receive 2 days of face-to-face instruction and 3 days of independent learning activities via Canvas.

Secondary Hybrid students will receive 2 days of face-to-face instruction and 2 days of virtual instruction. Students will receive direct instruction twice a week (1 day face-to-face, 1 day virtual) per course. First block courses will receive 4 days of direct instruction (2 days face-to-face, 2 days virtual). Friday will be an independent virtual learning day.

As a reminder we have three **Hybrid Instructional Models (Hybrid 3)** for Secondary Instruction:

Hybrid 45: Teachers will instruct hybrid students during the first 45 minutes of the period and instruct virtual students live during the second half of the period.

Hybrid Flipped: Teachers will provide recorded direct instruction and activities prior to the class meeting. Live instruction will include applied, collaborative practice with hybrid and

virtual students in small groups. Student groups (hybrid and virtual) may be brought together to close the class.

Hybrid Sync: Teachers will instruct virtual and hybrid students simultaneously utilizing the technologies currently available. Teachers will monitor and respond to hybrid and virtual students during the designated learning period.

Our student population will be divided into three cohorts for instruction: Cohort A-students in the face-to-face setting on Mondays and Wednesdays, Cohort B-students in the face-to-face setting for Tuesdays and Thursdays, and Cohort V-for those students who will remain in virtual instruction. Therefore, the hours of operation for the entire school division will be re-adjusted to better fit the needs of our students and school community.

Students attending the College and Career Academy at Pruden (CCAP) will attend their base school one day per week and attend CCAP two days per week on an A or B odd/even schedule. Students will receive a schedule notification from CCAP prior to schools reopening.

Childcare

Suffolk Public Schools will continue to partner with AlphaBEST and Parks and Recreation to provide childcare services for the asynchronous days while students are in the hybrid model. Both agencies will open their before and after school programs when the students return to school. Staff members that use AlphaBEST must update their childcare plans with AlphaBEST February 22, 2021-February 26, 2021. As a reminder, staff will pay for their own before and after school care on the days that their student is in school. Parks and Recreation will provide before and after school care at the following schools:

BTWES

CES

MBJES

OES

NSES

KFMS

Please contact either AlphaBEST or Parks and Recreation for more information.

Playground Equipment Use

We understand that children need the normalcy of recess for both their mental and physical well-being. Therefore, we will allow our students to use the playground equipment, as long as

they wear a mask and practice social distancing. Children will be expected to wash their hands immediately after leaving recess.

SAO Hours of Operation

On March 8, 2021, the School Administrative Offices will resume its normal daily schedule as follows:

Monday-Thursday, 8:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m.

Friday, 8:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m.

Based on the communication that I have received from our school community, I know that many of you are eager to have your children return to face-to-face instruction, while some of you still hold reservations as to what this return will look like. We cannot stress enough that our primary focus is always on the safety of staff and students. Suffolk Public Schools will continue to implement prevention and protection strategies to mitigate the spread of the COVID-19 virus. Additionally, we will continue to maintain close contact with the Suffolk Health Department to receive updates as they become available.

We will ensure that staff and students return back to school in an environment of excitement, love and care. Thank you for your patience, understanding, and continued support of our school division as we press forward in #BuildingTheBestSPS.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John B. Gordon, III". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Dr. John B. Gordon, III
Division Superintendent