

Pitman Public Schools

Return to School Planning Update

July 28, 2020

Over the past several weeks, the Pitman Public Schools Return to School Task Force has been working diligently to develop a plan for the reopening of schools in fall 2020. The Task Force consists of multiple “working groups” that have identified and discussed a wide range of concerns to ensure that we can efficiently develop a safe school reopening plan that reflects multiple perspectives and input from school leaders, teachers and staff from each of the schools, as well as students, parents and other community members. The Board of Education has also received regular updates throughout the process. The Task Force’s mission is to develop a plan that meets the needs of our students, families, teachers, and other employees, and also meets/exceeds the “minimum standards” outlined in NJ Department of Education guidelines issued in late June; you may review those guidelines [here](#).

The following are a few determinations that we would like to communicate at this time (note: these plans are **tentative** pending Pitman Board of Education approval and compliance review by the NJ Department of Education):

Student Cohorts and Proposed Instructional Schedule 2020-2021

Based on the research and feedback of our various working groups and our administrative team, we determined that this schedule is the best way to keep our staff and students as safe as possible while providing meaningful instruction. Minimum safety standards include social distancing in classrooms, hallways, and common areas to the greatest extent possible. An in-person component is also mandated by NJDOE guidelines.

In order to provide 6 feet of social distance between students, we must divide them into **cohorts** (smaller groups of students who will follow a similar schedule/program) and serve them through a **hybrid schedule** (includes both in-person and remote learning components).

Cohorts	
Cohorts A and B (grades 1-12)	Most students
Cohort C	Selected student populations based on specific instructional needs (e.g. students enrolled in self-contained special education programs)
Cohort D	Selected student populations based on student health or family option (full remote)
Preschool and Kindergarten	2.5 hour daily sessions (AM and PM cohorts) - onsite 4 days/week, remote on 1 day/week

Elementary and MS Scheduling model: we have proposed a common hybrid schedule for most students in grades 1-8 each week - Cohorts A and B will be onsite two days each week, and participate in remote instruction on three days/week. Preschool and Kindergarten will both run as half day programs (AM/PM sessions - 2.5 hours/day); Pre-K, Kindergarten, and Cohort C students in grades 1-8 will be onsite four days/week. Note: in grades 6-8, remote students may be able to “attend” live broadcasts of classes via Google Meet.

Elementary and Middle School Cohorts	Monday and Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday and Friday
Cohort A	In-Person	Remote	Remote (with live broadcast)
Cohort B	Remote (with live broadcast)	Remote	In-Person
Cohort C	In-Person	Remote	In-Person
Cohort D	Remote (with live broadcast)	Remote	Remote (with live broadcast)
Preschool and Kindergarten (both AM and PM sessions)	In-Person	Remote	In-Person

HS Scheduling model: the high school will follow an alternating weekly rotation, with Cohort A onsite while Cohort B is learning remotely. The onsite cohort attends school four days in-person, one day remote learning, while the other cohort is full remote for that week, with live synchronous instruction on four days. Cohorts A/B switch for the following week (no weekly rotation for Cohorts C and D). Cohort C students will be onsite four days/week.

High School		Monday and Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday and Friday
Cohort A	week 1	In-Person	Remote	In-Person
	week 2	Remote (with live broadcast)	Remote	Remote (with live broadcast)
Cohort B	week 1	Remote (with live broadcast)	Remote	Remote (with live broadcast)
	week 2	In-Person	Remote	In-Person
Cohort C	all weeks	In-Person	Remote	In-Person
Cohort D	all weeks	Remote (with live broadcast)	Remote	Remote (with live broadcast)

Tentative Schedule - In-Person Instruction (M/T and/or Th/F)	
Memorial	8:40 - 12:40 (grade 1) 8:40 - 11:10 (AM session - PreK and K) 12:30 - 3:00 (PM session - PreK and K)
Walls and Kindle	8:20 - 12:20 (all grades)
Middle School	8:00 - 12:40 (all grades)
High School	8:00 - 12:35 (all grades)

Additional Information

- Additional details of the return to school plan will be released over the next two weeks. **In the next few days**, we expect to conduct follow up surveys of families and district staff to get updated information that will be useful to our planning. **At that time, families will have an opportunity to indicate their choice of hybrid or fully remote instruction.** Please watch your email inbox over the next few days, and share your preference with us.
 - We will make every effort so that all children residing at the same address are assigned to the same cohort (A or B), unless the parent selects remote instruction (Cohort D) for a particular child.
 - Cohort C will automatically be assigned to students in self-contained special education programs; however, parents of these children may select the fully remote option (Cohort D).
 - For parents who are opting for in-person instruction (Cohorts A or B), please be aware that we cannot accommodate requests for a specific cohort (A or B).
 - Wednesday will include remote instruction for all students; it will also include teacher office hours, synchronous check-ins, and virtual supplemental supports. It will also allow for deep cleaning of our school buildings.
- **All staff and visitors will be required to wear face coverings** (masks, face shields, etc.); as a rule, **students will also be required to do so.** We are exploring opportunities for periodic “mask breaks” done in a safe manner/location (especially for younger students), and understand that medical exceptions may exist. We encourage parents to review our final plan when it is released next month; we also suggest building your child’s mask endurance prior to the start of the school year; an informative article on this subject can be reviewed [here](#).
- Remote instruction - We recognize that remote instruction must be different in certain ways from how it took place in the spring. We are developing remote teaching/learning protocols that are more rigorous, hold students more accountable (grades, deadlines for assignments, etc.), and are more structured. We will have additional details regarding programming for a fully remote option when the final return to school plan is released publicly in about two weeks, and once we have a clear idea of the number of participants from each school.
- Student meals - At this time, we believe that school breakfast and lunch will be offered as a “grab and go” model. Meals will be available for purchase and pickup upon arrival at school. Students will be

able to eat their breakfast in class/homeroom, but lunches will be prepared “to go” for students before dismissal. It is unlikely that there will be any large scale lunchroom dining for students at school.

- Childcare (Panther Club) - As part of the follow up surveys mentioned above, we will be asking families to provide an updated response regarding their childcare needs. We are exploring options that would offer “extended day” coverage, but this will depend on our capacity to safely distance students and adequately staff the program. Once the level of need is identified, we will have updates on the Panther Club program.
- Among the wide range of other issues that the final plan will address include:
 - General Health and Safety Guidelines
 - Classrooms and Other Instructional Spaces
 - Transportation and Off-Campus Activities/Events (e.g. field trips/experiences)
 - Student Flow, Entry, Exit, and Common Areas of Buildings
 - Health Screening, PPE, and Response to Students/Staff Presenting Symptoms
 - Contact Tracing
 - Facilities Cleaning Practices
 - Recess/Physical Education and Outdoor Activities
 - Extracurricular Activities and Use of Facilities Outside of School Hours
 - Details on Remote Instruction Option for Families

We understand and appreciate that it is difficult to make a fully-informed decision about your child(ren)’s instruction without receiving the final re-opening plan (as it is being developed); however, we wanted to share this information with families and staff members now so that they can begin to consider their options.

Reminder: the first day of school for students is **Tuesday, September 8, 2020**. Details and schedules for the opening week of school will be shared soon.