



## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **SCHOOL RE-ENTRY & STUDENT LEARNING OPTIONS**

#### **(7/2/20)**

The District's comprehensive S.A.F.E. Re-Entry Plan will be presented the week of July 6. [View a summary of plan highlights here.](#) Please understand that portions of the plan are subject to change based on direction from the Shelby County Health Department and State officials, as well as CDC guidance.

Procedures may vary to an extent at individual schools, so families should also expect to hear directly from their principals and teachers leading up to the start of the school year.

Don't forget to update all contact information in PowerSchool this summer to receive important updates from the District and schools. Also be sure to stay tuned to SCS and school websites and social media pages for news and announcements about the reopening of schools.

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**1. Will parents have the option to choose in-person attendance or virtual learning for their children and families?**

Yes. We are responding to the requests of families to provide [two learning options](#) for the 2020-21 fall semester. Parents can choose a fully in-school learning option with daily in-class instruction or a fully virtual model with teacher-led instruction at home based on the needs of their child and the format they feel will best support his/her learning. We will be asking parents to commit to a choice for the first semester in PowerSchool July 6-18 so we have adequate time to plan for all of the necessary supports students and families will need when the school year begins. If a parent does not make a choice by July 18, the student will be enrolled in the in-school option for the fall. All parents will have an opportunity to re-evaluate their choices after the fall semester.

**2. When is the first day of school for the 2020-21 school year?**

The 2020-21 school year will begin August 31 for all students (pending Board approval) based on the Governor's extended state of emergency declaration through August 29 due to rising cases of COVID-19.

**3. Will students be required to wear a mask in the fall?**

Yes. Until there is a vaccine for COVID-19, face masks will be a part of our daily lives. Face masks will be required for students, staff and visitors in all buildings and on buses when school begins. Masks should be added to every family's back-to-school supply list, as it will be the responsibility of the parent to ensure students arrive at school each day with the necessary face mask. Mask requirements may change over time due to the latest guidance from health officials. \*Please check with the Department of Exceptional Children

and Health Services for guidance about students with respiratory problems and those who are incapacitated/unable to remove the mask without assistance or have sensory sensitivities.

**4. How will social distancing be implemented in schools?**

Schools will be utilizing all available classroom and learning spaces and making necessary modifications to help ensure social distancing to every extent possible. While social distancing may be challenging at times in smaller buildings or where there are very large student populations, additional safeguards will also be in place for all schools, such as daily health screenings, face masks for all students and staff and hand sanitizer access for all classes. Social distancing signage and floor decals will be displayed prominently throughout all schools and buildings. We will also be limiting interactions of classes and discouraging all group gatherings, as well as limiting visitor volume.

**5. What health and safety measures are being implemented on buses?**

Students who ride a school bus will be required to wear a mask and will undergo temperature checks at the school each day. Buses will also be cleaned and disinfected between routes and at the end of each day. Based on the District's protocols for student bus transportation, parents must decide if they want their child to continue to ride the bus or find another option of transportation.

**6. Will the District be providing or requiring COVID-19 tests for students and staff?**

No. We will not administer or require COVID-19 tests of employees or students. However, we will check temperatures and ensure that people inside our schools and office buildings are symptom-free. We will also strongly encourage all students and staff who are not feeling well to stay at home.

**7. What if my child does not have a laptop and internet access?**

As part of the recently approved 1:1 Digital Device Plan, we will begin distributing devices to students without access at home in early July based on grade level. Distribution will start with students who choose the fully virtual learning option, then continue through August and September by grade level beginning with high schools. More information will be shared about distribution plans and technology support for families.

**8. Will there be training sessions for families to understand how to use devices and digital learning platforms?**

Yes. We are hosting [parent trainings](#) to learn how to use Microsoft Teams, which is the District's preferred platform for virtual communication between teachers and schools. We will be adding more sessions for families throughout the summer to better understand various digital learning programs, and we are also working to create a technology support hotline that parents will have access to throughout the school year.

**9. How will students make up for lost instruction due to school closures in the spring?**

We will be offering optional Saturday learning academies throughout the year, as well as learning academies during Fall Break and Spring Break, to provide additional enrichment for our students.

**10. How will parents be informed if there is a COVID-19 outbreak occurs at a school?**

We will continue to work closely with the Shelby County Health Department to ensure we follow the proper guidance for responding to any potential cases of COVID-19 in our schools. We will be implementing safeguards, such as daily temperature checks, and creating isolation areas in all buildings for anyone displaying symptoms to help prevent the spread of illness. We will also strongly encourage all students and

staff who are not feeling well to stay at home. In the event that a positive case is identified, families will be informed in a timely manner, including any possible Health Department guidance regarding precautionary testing that may be necessary. Parents should also be prepared for the possibility of an unexpected short-term school closures based on guidance from health officials.

**11. If there is an outbreak and schools have to close, what is the plan for continued instruction?**

In the event of an outbreak, students will continue to receive instruction from their assigned teacher of record virtually through the use of Microsoft TEAMS. Digital devices will be provided to students who do not have access to a device at home.

**12. What will a typical learning day be like for students who choose the at-home/virtual option?**

The typical school day for virtual students should be structured similar to an in-school schedule, with allotted time for each core content area, elective and intervention period. Students will have the opportunity to participate in independent learning, along with guided instruction from the classroom teacher through the use of Microsoft TEAMS.

**13. Will grading be the same for in-school and virtual learning?**

Regardless of the type of learning environment provided to our students, teachers will continue to follow all grading protocols established in 2019-20. However, teachers will also ensure students receive credit for time spent using intervention software, such as iReady, Edgenuity or similar programs. Whenever a student completes at least 45 minutes on any day for ELA or Math, a 100 should be included as a class participation grade for the student in the relevant subject area for that day.

**14. Will schools offer before- and after-care programs?**

The District recognizes that before- and after-school care is important for working parents. So long as schools are open, regular before- and after-care programs will be offered.

**15. How will pick-up and drop-off procedures be handled at schools?**

Parents should expect to hear directly from their principals about pick-up and drop-off procedures, as it will vary by campus. Parents should not expect to walk their students to class when school opens in order to allow for temperature checks and maintain social distancing in buildings. Staggered drop-off and dismissal schedules may also be implemented to reduce the volume of people on campus at one time.

**16. Will students eat breakfast and lunch together in the cafeteria?**

Convening a large number of students in cafeterias for the purposes of breakfast and lunch increases the risk of virus spread. Where possible, schools will continue to utilize the cafeteria for the consumption of student meals with modifications to ensure the health and safety of students. School lunch and breakfast procedures will vary by campus, but parents should expect some combination of grab and go meals, shorter lunch periods or lunches consumed in the student's classroom or outdoors.

**17. Will the District provide virtual educational options to exceptional children?**

Yes. Virtual educational options will be developed by each student's respective IEP team.

**18. Will after-school/extracurricular activities and athletics be offered?**

Involvement in after-school/extracurricular activities is an important part of a student's school experience. However, when schools open, we must take all precautions to limit the potential spread of the virus, so group gatherings and activities will be limited. Guidelines and availability of certain activities may vary by school and program type, so parents should expect to hear from their principals about the available after-school/extracurricular offerings at their school.