

March 12, 2021

Dear South Orange & Maplewood School District Families,

Late yesterday evening we were alerted by the PERC mediator that SOMEA has agreed to return to in-person learning for **Kgn-2nd grade students only** on Monday, March 15.

The Board remains ready and committed to the full return of all Phase 3 students, including 6th and 9th grade students. We will move forward with having Kgn-2nd grade and Cohort C students reenter school on Monday, March 15, but will continue to focus on returning ALL of our students. The District's primary goal has always been to offer our families the opportunity for in-person instruction safely within the rooms that have already been designated by the District as "ready," meaning they meet safety standards. We understand the social-emotional toll that this situation has caused for students and families and we look forward to having this next subset of students return to school with more to follow in the coming weeks and months.

With this return, in addition to our Kgn-2nd grade and Cohort C students and teachers...our para-professionals, specialists (art, music, PE etc.), school and central office secretaries, and clerical staff will also be returning to their respective buildings. Please review other important operational and logistical details below:

<p>Schedules:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● All elementary schools will return to their regular hybrid start times across all grade-levels (K-2, Cohort C as well as 3 - 5) ● For grades 3 - 5 we understand that the schedule change is not ideal, however, we are unable to run competing schedules (i.e., hybrid vs. virtual) due to shared resources across elementary schools. ● K-2 and Cohort C families will receive more detailed information from their building principals regarding start times and other logistics for Monday's return to hybrid instruction.
<p>Food Distribution:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Beginning on Monday, March 15, grab and go lunches will be provided to students attending hybrid instruction. Meals will be provided during dismissal. ● All other students can pick up meals at CHS or Seth Boyden between 12pm and 2pm.
<p>YMCA:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Y will continue to offer aftercare at all elementary schools for grades 3 - 5 students ● The Pre-K program will remain at Jefferson Elementary school ● Full-day virtual programming will be held at the Y facility.
<p>Change Request:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Phase 3: Change request (from virtual to hybrid) for Phase 3 will only be honored to families who have submitted their request to their building principal by the February 22 deadline.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● March 25, 2021, is the next change request date for our tentative phased-in re-entry scheduled for April 19<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ IMPORTANT: Please note, regardless of the grade-levels that re-enter on April 19, this will be the <u>final opportunity</u> for the school year for parents to make a virtual to hybrid change request for their child to their building principal. In addition, a change request will always be subject to space capacity.
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As we shared, the Board’s labor counsel continues to communicate through the mediator advocating for our 6th and 9th grade students return; and we will continue planning for a next phased re-entry on April 19 (two-weeks after Spring Break and at a time when our building’s heating systems are traditionally taken offline).

We apologize for the late update, however, there are many operational and logistical details that had to be resolved (i.e. transportation, food distribution, crossing guards, schedules) to ensure a smooth re-entry for our students. We thank our building principals and central office staff for their work to ensure that we provided our families with the details needed for their child's return to school.

Once again, we thank you for your continued support and patience. Enjoy the beautiful weekend and we look forward to seeing our Kgn-2nd grade and Cohort C students back in school for in-person instruction starting on Monday, March 15.

South Orange & Maplewood School District