

Sudbury School Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
August 10, 2020  
Virtual Meeting

**Members Present:**

Lisa Kouchakdjian, Chair  
Silvia Nerssessian, Vice Chair  
Maggie Helon  
Meredith Gerson  
Christine Hogan  
Sarah Troiano, Member-Elect

**Members Absent:**

None

**Also Present:**

Brad Crozier, Superintendent  
Don Sawyer, Director of Business and Finance  
Kim Swain, Assistant Superintendent

**Special Session Meeting**

Chair Lisa Kouchakdjian opened the meeting at 7:32 PM.

1. Review Joint Statement on COVID-19
  - a. The School Committee reviewed a proposed joint statement to be released alongside the Lincoln and Lincoln-Sudbury School Committees; and the Sudbury School Committees and Superintendents, Select Boards and Town Managers, and Boards of Health.
    - i. Silvia Nerssessian motioned to approve the Joint Statement on COVID-19, as presented, Christine Hogan seconded.
      1. ROLL CALL VOTE
        - a. Meredith Gerson: Aye
        - b. Maggie Helon: Aye
        - c. Christine Hogan: Aye
        - d. Lisa Kouchakdjian: Aye
        - e. Silvia Nerssessian: Aye
          - i. **VOTE: 5-0.** Motion carries.

## 2. Public Forum on Reopening Plans

- a. The Committee engaged the community in a question-and-answer period regarding the District Reopening Plans. The public was able to call in via Zoom or email Silvia Nerssessian throughout the course of the Forum.
- b. Superintendent Brad Crozier provided a presentation on the SPS Preliminary Reopening plan. Highlights from Superintendent Crozier's presentation include:
  - i. A focus on safely bringing students and staff back to school using a model that maximizes good health, learning, and the holistic needs of students.
  - ii. SPS has contracted with an HVAC consultancy firm to evaluate each school's HVAC system and make recommendations for health and safety
  - iii. All bus riders will be asked to wear a mask, and social distancing will be maximized by restrict riders to one per bench.
  - iv. There are three learning models: modified in-person, hybrid, and full remote. SPS will be offering hybrid and full remote (Sudbury Remote Learning Academy).
  - v. The SPS hybrid learning model will follow a 2 days in, 3 days remote pattern.
  - vi. Students in the Remote Academy will be eligible to receive Special Education, 504, Title One, ESL, Guidance, and/or literacy support services from the student's home school.
  - vii. SPS is committed to support the learning of all students with disabilities and those of special populations (ELLs, homeless, or in foster care) to the greatest extent possible
- c. Public Comment
  - i. (Read by Silvia Nerssessian, no name/address provided) What will happen if a student is not available at the time of their synchronous lesson? Will it be available to view later, or will they be marked "absent"?
    1. SPS would like students to have access to the material after its initial delivery, but further work is necessary to determine how this will be handled.
  - ii. Giselle Ganz, ABA Tutor at Curtis Middle School, presented COVID-19 data from Mass.gov to the Committee. Ms. Ganz also inquired about the HVAC systems, who will monitor halls and bathrooms, what surfaces will be cleaned and how often?
    1. SPS is working with the HVAC consultant to determine best practices, but Superintendent Crozier anticipates using a new, more effective filter.
    2. SPS will be emphasizing handwashing and social distancing, as well as increasing the number of hand sanitizers dispensers in every building.
    3. Surfaces will be cleaned by both staff and custodial services, following a set protocol as well as by individual circumstances.

- iii. Laurie (no last name given), parent of an eighth grader, inquired about whether students will have different teachers for different subjects.
  - 1. Every teacher will be certified in the subject being taught, with some dual-certified teachers assigned multiple subjects.
- iv. Karen Conduris, Speech Pathologist with SPS, expressed concern in the number of children infected with COVID-19 and inquired about the metrics the Administration is using to make its reopening decisions.
  - 1. SPS has been in communication with the Sudbury Board of Health and the state Department of Public Health, and is awaiting a possible “trigger matrix” from DESE.
- v. David Varner asked if the Committee considered having this evening’s meeting in person.
  - 1. Plans are being made for the Committee to return to in-person meetings, but such a format was not considered for this evening.
- vi. Colleen Epple, of 36 Stone Road, inquired about what students’ activities will look like when they are enrolled in the hybrid program and on remote days; how Wednesdays will work when all students are remote; if the one-student-per row on buses will equate to six feet of distance from the next student; and who will monitor students on the bus to ensure proper behavior and social distancing.
  - 1. No bus monitors are planned, SPS will work with students on norming proper behavior and distancing.
  - 2. Students will have live face-to-face learning opportunities with teachers on remote days as well as private conference opportunities, but fine details are still being determined.
  - 3. Teachers will spend time on in-person days previewing lessons and schedules for students’ upcoming remote days.
  - 4. According to information presented by DESE and the state Transportation Board, there will be six feet of distance between students.
- vii. Allison Whitebone, of 28 Old Forge Lane, inquired about what level of continuity there will be in the lesson planning for the hybrid model and the Sudbury Remote Academy.
  - 1. The Remote Academy will use the SPS scope and sequence, as well as following the SPS curriculum and benchmarks, but fine details are to be determined.
- viii. Kay Bell, of Old Lancaster Road, spoke to the Committee about the necessity for examining the fine details, as well as her beliefs that Sudbury has been late in developing plans, and that Sudbury Public Schools should now fully commit to remote learning. Ms. Bell also inquired about how SPS will ensure that students maintain proper social distancing.

1. SPS will teach students proper social distancing techniques, as well as placing markers on the floor.
  2. At the middle school level, student time in the halls will be restricted and teachers will work together to ensure proper social distancing.
  3. The district will also be requiring facemasks to be worn, which adds a layer of protection even when six feet of distance cannot be maintained.
- ix. Laura Sperry, of 65 Lakewood Drive, inquired about when cohort information will be released
1. August 19th, 2020
- x. Laura Gamel, of Marlborough Road, inquired about the educational plan for children who are otherwise healthy, but are kept home due to exposure to COVID-19. Ms. Gamel also asked if any thought had been given to using teaching assistants to help with managing cohorts.
1. SPS is looking at ways to use all staff to engage students throughout the day in both cohorts.
  2. Students quarantining will still receive instruction via a substitute, teaching assistant, or other staff member.
- xi. Laura Demerle, of 5 Austin Road, inquired about whether students in Cohort C will still be able to attend school in-person even if the district switches to an all-remote model.
1. This will depend on the reason for the district going full remote, but the district is committed to providing appropriate services in any circumstance.
- xii. Norma Delaney, of 359 Old Lancaster Road, asked for more information on the benefits of the Remote Academy. Ms. Delaney also asked if there is a way for families to change their Family Designation Form responses.
1. If a family is interested in changing their responses to the Designation Form, they can fill it out a second time and the district will reach out to follow-up.
  2. The pros and cons of each model are dependent on each family and, indeed, each learner.
- xiii. Emily Cooperman, of 26 Hollow Oak Drive, inquired about whether children enrolled in the Remote Academy will have the ability to make connections with other students and if counselors will be available for them.
1. SPS plans on having all services available for students in the Remote Academy.
- xiv. Monica Rogan, of 80 Goodnow Road, asked when more details about safety protocols and procedures will be available. Ms. Rogan also inquired about whether outdoor learning opportunities are being considered for remote learners.

1. SPS will require masks to be worn in schools, and has disseminated information on proper mask wearing and maintenance. At the building level, classroom layouts have been studied to ensure proper social distancing is possible, and some plexiglass partitions have been ordered.
  2. SPS is considering outdoor learning opportunities for students in the Remote Academy.
- xv. Erica Silverman, of 21 Moran Circle, asked for a clearer definition of the term “educator directed” as it applies to remote learning days for hybrid students. Ms. Silverman also inquired about whether a positive COVID test in a cohort will require the entire cohort to quarantine for fourteen days. Ms. Silverman’s final question pertained to whether new studies on the efficacy of neck gaiters has led the district to reconsider their qualification as a form of facemask/covering.
1. The district will recommend that families seek coverings that are at least two-ply.
  2. Contact tracing and investigation will occur following positive tests to attempt to determine if the student was in contact with other children during the 48 hour infection window. It is possible cohorts could be required to quarantine, but learning will continue.
  3. “Educator directed” activities may include holding the morning meeting together, reviewing the learning plan for the day, engaging in phonics work, or number corner.
- xvi. Lakshmi (no last name given), of Hager Lane, asked for clarification on what parents are selecting in the Family Designation Form.
1. The difference between the Remote Academy and the hybrid model is that the hybrid begins with partial in-person learning and only goes full remote based upon extenuating circumstances, such as another lockdown or significant increase in disease transmission. The Remote Academy is a 100% online learning option from day one.
- xvii. Amrita Nichols, of 54 Balcom Road, inquired about what, if anything, the district is doing to ensure continuity of practices within a grade level but across schools in remote learning environments. Ms. Nichols also inquired about whether students in 2nd grade will be required to have email addresses in order to communicate with teachers.
1. Additional resources have been purchased and practices have been aligned to ensure that there is less discrepancy across the district compared to how things were managed during the spring remote learning period.
  2. Much of student learning will be conducted through the Google Classroom online software, and limited email capabilities are

being activated for students in grades 2-5, so some communication may occur that way.

- xviii. Kurt Larson, of 95 Water Row, asked when bus routes will be released and when parents will be required to make a decision about opting into the bus program. Mr. Larson also inquired about what data security efforts the district is taking in light of its decision to use Google products.
1. Bus routes will likely be released at the end of August, once cohorts have been established and more information has been collected regarding who will be riding the busses.
  2. The educational licensing between Google and the Massachusetts Consortium for Data Privacy does protect student data. Further, SPS does not store much personally identifying information in the Google suite.
- xix. Sara Abramson, of 16 Cedar Creek Road, asked for clarity on what will be expected of parents in the learning process.
1. This will vary by student. SPS is planning for more direct instruction than in the past, which should put parents in a more supportive role.
  2. SPS may produce how-to screencasts and/or videos to help parents.
- xx. Anna Grosso, of 11 East Street, asked how the administration is mitigating the risk of infection spread by staff members who live in communities with higher transmission rates than Sudbury.
1. Like students, staff will be asked to wash their hands, wear masks, and maintain proper social distancing. SPS Administration may also raise this topic with the Sudbury Board of Health.
- xxi. Susan Francis, of Windmill Drive, inquired about what special considerations are being made for children who have never been in a school building before (i.e., kindergartners).
1. SPS has had many conversations about how to plan for an opening that is methodical and child-centered, with thoughtful scripts for these groups of children.
  2. The school PTOs are working on “kindergarten orientation” sessions that may happen on the playground of each elementary school, where kindergartners can meet the other kids in his or her class.
  3. Special plans are being developed and software being purchased to help the district’s youngest learners on remote days.
- xxii. Christine Mariana, of 31 Thunder Road, asked what platform and vendor SPS will be using for the Remote Academy.
1. SPS will use the Schoology and the Sudbury curriculum to support the Remote Academy.

- xxiii. Maia Proujansky Bell, of Lakewood Drive, read a letter on behalf of her son, a sixth grader at Curtis Middle School. The letter requested that a survey be sent to students and teachers to gauge their opinions on the SPS reopening plans.
- xxiv. Jamal Sayed and Amara Hahn, of Fox Run Road, asked what the timeframe is to define and release information to the community. Mr. Sayed and Ms. Hahn also asked what the protocols were for handling infections/positive tests. They also expressed concern about kindergartners wearing masks for the entirety of the school day, and asked what would happen if they are not able to do that.
1. Early observations show that preschoolers and kindergartners do have the stamina to wear masks for extended periods, particularly when paired with “mask breaks”
  2. Information on the protocols for the closure of buildings and management of sites where COVID is present is available on the Reopening Resources page of the SPS website.
  3. SPS is constantly updating the Reopening Resources page of the website.
- xxv. Anna and Shawn McCormack, of 20 Silver Hill Road, inquired about why the district is leaning so heavily upon a hybrid model that has numerous question marks related to its operation, instead of around the Remote Academy.
1. SPS highly values the interaction between teacher and student, and believes there is no substitute for that.
- xxvi. Lauren House, of Pilgrim’s Path, requested a more explicit breakdown of hours with direct teacher interaction in both the hybrid and remote models. Ms. House also questioned how teachers will simultaneously manage students physically present and those learning remotely.
1. The hybrid model allows class sizes of 8-12 students.
  2. While there will be synchronous learning opportunities for students on their remote days, the teacher’s priority will be on the connecting with the students physically present in the classroom.
- xxvii. Craig Merkle, of 76 Longfellow Road, asked what time the school day will start on the remote learning Wednesdays.
1. Elementary school students will start at the normally scheduled time of 7:55.
- xxviii. Rob Stolper, of 30 Meadow Drive, asked about lessons learned about best practices from other districts across the state and country. Mr. Stolper also inquired about how the district settled on a Monday-Thursday/Tuesday-Friday schedule for the remote cohorts
1. Superintendent Crozier cited focusing on the social emotional needs of students who had never experienced prolonged remote learning before the spring shutdown.

2. Remote cohort schedules were designed to limit the amount of time students spend without direct, in person instruction from a teacher.
- xxix. Kristen Fox, of Briscom Road, asked if consideration is being given to allocating more in-person learning time to younger students compared to older students. Ms. Fox also inquired about what the first day of school will be, including for kindergartners.
1. The school year calendar, including what will happen with kindergarten, will be discussed at the next School Committee meeting.
  2. SPS has had conversations about having younger students in the classroom more often than older students.
- xxx. Kate Freitas, of 140 Barton Drive, also a teacher in Sudbury Public Schools, asked what the acceptable number of teacher or student deaths would be.
1. No response given by the School Committee or Administration.
- xxxi. Patrick (no last name given), of (address unintelligible), asked what the number of COVID cases would be in order to shut a school down and force the children into a full remote model.
1. The State has not yet established a firm metric for shutting down schools, but SPS remains in contact with the Sudbury Board of Health and the state Department of Health.
- xxxii. Colleen (no last name given), of (no address given), inquired about how teachers are feeling in regards to the reopening. Colleen also asked what the back-up plan would be if a teacher contracted COVID.
1. Teachers have been surveyed and were involved in the creation of the Reopening Plan. Negotiations are also ongoing in regards to potential changes to the teachers' contract.
  2. SPS is planning to hire building substitutes who can step into a teacher's role in the event of a teacher contracting COVID.
- xxxiii. Sara Freire, of 3 Willis Lake Drive, asked what accommodations or plans are being made for students with pre-existing respiratory issues, particularly as it applies to wearing a mask.
1. Most students with respiratory issues should be able to wear a mask in most conditions. If parents have concerns, though, they will be able to reach out to their child's school for an individualized conversation.
- xxxiv. Debbie Moynihan, of 80 Raymond Road, asked if curriculum materials would be available for parents to review and enhance for remote learners. Ms. Moynihan also inquired about teacher-to-student ratios for the Remote Academy
1. SPS can provide parents with the scope and sequence, but teachers manuals and similar resources would be cost prohibitive.



Interested parents should contact their child's home school's principal.

2. Per DESE guidance, teacher-to-student ratios for the Remote Academy will be set as a function of total enrollment, and thus have yet to be determined.
- xxxv. Sarah Murphy, of 97 Thunder Road, also a second grade teacher at Noyes Elementary School, spoke to the Committee about concerns she has with opening into the hybrid model as opposed to the full remote model.
- xxxvi. Maryanne Weldon, of 15 Harness Lane, inquired about how cohorts are being developed at the middle school level. Ms. Weldon also asked how SPS intends to build social emotional learning into the hybrid model, as well as the financial sustainability of having both a hybrid model and remote model.
1. SPS is working hard to ensure that each cohort is a balanced mix of students in terms of learning, emotional needs, supportive needs, etc.
  2. The ability to flex staff between the models helps make both models financially viable.
- xxxvii. Brendan Hannigan, of 63 Pinewood Ave, inquired about what specifically is being done to reduce student-to-teacher ratios in remote learning scenarios.
1. DESE has provided ratios for student-to-teacher ratios for online classes, and SPS's planned classes are within those guidelines.
- xxxviii. Rachel Nelson, of 21 Magnolia Road, inquired about whether concepts will be repeated for hybrid model students returning from their remote days or if they will be ready to move onto the next concept.
1. This is circumstantial, and thus will be determined on a case-by-case basis.
- xxxix. Michelle McMahon-Downer, of 83 Hopestill Road, spoke to the Committee about COVID-19 transmission rates in Massachusetts in general and Sudbury in particular, the need to adapt to life with the virus, and her support for opening in the hybrid model.
- xl. Roberta Unger, an ABA Tutor At Curtis Middle School, how teachers can be assured SPS will hire and maintain a high-quality staff of substitute teachers. Ms. Unger also informed the Committee that when she returns to work, it will be her first time in any public building with more than fifteen other people since the start of the pandemic.
1. No response given by the School Committee or Administration.
- xli. Kipp Irving, of Thunder Road, inquired about how social distancing will be maintained on buses, what students' direct contact with their teacher will look like in the remote model, and what the student-teacher ratio be in the remote model.

1. No hard numbers will be available on student-teacher ratios until sign-ups are complete, but the recommended range from DESE is 25-30 students per teacher.
  2. Information on how much time students will spend with their teacher in the remote model is available in the Superintendent's presentation. Content will follow the normal scope and sequence established for all classes in the SPS.
- xlii. Lauren Cummings, a Math Teacher at Curtis, spoke to the Committee about her support for the remote model.
  - xliii. Erin Kehew, a Special Education teacher at Haynes, spoke to the Committee about the purpose of the Superintendent's Taskforce on Reopening and how it relates to the decisions being made on reopening schools. Ms. Kehew also expressed her support for the remote model.
  - xliv. Sarah Thompson, of 61 Dakin Road, spoke to the Committee about the current moment being an opportunity for partnership between parents and teachers, including teachers sharing curriculum materials with parents when requested.
  - xliv. Tina (no last name given), of (no address given), spoke to the Committee about the value of relying on multiple layers of protection (washing hands, wearing masks, maintaining proper social distance). Tina also reviewed statistics on student-to-student and student-to-teacher transmission rates.
  - xlvi. Jamie Drutler, of Goodman Hill Road, spoke to the Committee about the necessity of becoming knowledgeable about the medical aspects of the COVID-19 pandemic and response. Ms. Drutler also emphasized that hybrid/remote decision is a personal one that each family needs to make for itself.

### 3. Adjournment

- a. Silvia Nerssessionian motioned to adjourn at 11:57 P.M., Meredith Gerson seconded.
  - i. ROLL CALL VOTE
    1. Meredith Gerson: Aye
    2. Maggie Helon: Aye
    3. Lisa Kouchakdjian: Aye
    4. Silvia Nerssessionian: Aye

a. **VOTE:4-0.** Motion carries.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Justin Dulak

### **Documents Reviewed During the August 10, 2020 School Committee Meeting**

1. Draft Statement from the Lincoln, Lincoln-Sudbury, and Sudbury School Committees and Superintendents, Select Boards and Town Managers, and Boards of Health-Red Lined

2. Draft Statement from the Lincoln, Lincoln-Sudbury, and Sudbury School Committees and Superintendents, Select Boards and Town Managers, and Boards of Health-Clean
3. "SPS Preliminary Reopening Plan: Transitioning Safely Back to School, August 6, 2020