



SUFFOLK PUBLIC SCHOOLS



Dr. John B. Gordon III, Superintendent

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August 4, 2020

SPS Family:

I am writing this morning to provide you with the official news that I know our entire school community has been anticipating. At our School Board meeting on August 6, 2020, my leadership team and I will recommend a fully virtual start for the 2020-2021 school year. This recommendation aligns with our values of prioritizing the health and safety of our students and staff as we continue to monitor the current health conditions of the city of Suffolk and our region.

We all wanted our students to be back in school in our traditional face to face model on September 8, 2020, however it is clear that there are too many risks at this time based on our evolving health information. Since the middle of June 2020, the average reported cases of Covid-19 in Virginia has been on the rise, and on July 28, 2020, Governor Northam announced renewed restrictions for Hampton Roads. I firmly believe that a virtual start, which would occur for at least the first nine weeks of the school year, is the most prudent way to protect the health and safety of all of our staff members and students.

While I know that having a virtual start to the school year eases some anxiety, there are questions on what virtual learning will look like for Suffolk Public Schools. As I have previously stated, our virtual learning model will not be the same model that we used for the 4th nine weeks of the 2019-2020 school year. Our Fall Learning Plan, *Educate and Innovate*, will utilize the teacher as the primary mode of instruction with several online platforms such as Canvas, our new learning management system, iReady (for Elementary students), Edgenuity (for Secondary students), and Google Classroom. Since school closed on March 13, 2020 our staff has worked tirelessly to create an engaging, innovative, and structured learning environment. Thank you to all of you who have provided us feedback through our surveys, Facebook Live sessions, School Board meetings, emails, and phone calls, just to name a few.

SPS Virtual Instruction-Educate and Innovate

It is our expectation that our staff will provide virtual instruction from our school buildings, Monday-Thursday. On Fridays, instructional staff will have the option of teleworking as we will use this day for instructional support for our students, office hours for parental communication, and professional learning to improve the virtual learning experience. We feel that having our staff come into our buildings will provide a consistent instructional model that includes:

- Teachers have all of their resources in the classroom.
- Administrators being able to provide real time observations to staff members on the overall engagement of the lesson.
- The school division has the ability to support adequate broadband for our online instructional platforms.
- A separation of work and home for mental health purposes for our staff.

We know that some of our staff have pre-existing medical conditions that put them at high risk for Covid-19. These staff members will work with the human resources department and our building administrators to finalize a plan that will allow them to telework.

Suffolk Public Schools understands the importance of providing a consistent structure and routine for our virtual model. Our Virtual Instructional Model will operate with the schedule listed below Monday-Thursday, with Friday serving as an instructional support day that includes teacher/student office hours, enrichment and remediation activities, as well as staff instructional planning and professional learning. We have been deliberate to include a Social-Emotional Learning component as we do not know how the pandemic has affected each individual student and staff member, transition time between periods/subjects, morning brain breaks, and a designated lunch window. The Suffolk Public Schools Virtual Instruction Schedule is listed below:

Elementary School

Instruction will be provided by way of synchronous and asynchronous (independent practice). The five core content areas (Reading, Writing, Math, Science, and Social Sciences) will be integrated to meet multiple standards. The elementary instructional model will focus on numeracy and literacy with Social Studies/Science integrated in the instruction.

Instructional Schedule	Time
Homeroom Morning Meetings with Social Emotional Learning (SEL) (15 minutes)	8:30 A.M. - 8:45 A.M.
Core Integrated Instruction (synchronous or asynchronous)	8:50 A.M. - 10:05 A.M.
Morning Brain Break	10:10 A.M. - 10:25 A.M.
Core Integrated Instruction (synchronous or asynchronous)	10:30 A.M. - 11:45 A.M.
Lunch	11:50 A.M. - 12:30 P.M.
Resource Class (alternating days)	12:35 P.M. - 1:20 P.M.
Remediation/Small Group/Enrichment	1:25 P.M. - 2:10 P.M.
Remediation/Gifted Resource/Talented Music/Art (Building Specific Schedule)	2:15 P.M.- 3:05 P.M.

Middle School (Grades 6 & 7 Only)

6th Grade Period	7th Grade Period	Time
Block 1 (Include Morning SEL)	Block 1 (Include Morning SEL)	8:30 A.M.-9:30 A.M.
Block 2	Block 2/3 Exploratory or Health/PE	9:35 A.M.-10:20 A.M.
Morning Brain Break	Morning Brain Break	10:25 A.M.-10:40 A.M.
Block 3	Block 4	10:45 A.M.-11:30 A.M.
Lunch	Lunch	11:35 A.M.-12:15 P.M.
Block 4/5 Exploratory or Health/PE	Block 5	12:20 P.M.-1:05 P.M.
Enrichment and Support for Periods 1 and 2/3		1:10 P.M.-2:05 P.M.
Enrichment and Support for Periods 3 and 4/5		2:10 P.M.-3:05 P.M.

Grade 8 and High School Schedule
Even Day: Periods 1, 2, 4, 6; Odd Day: Periods 1, 3, 5, 7

Period	Time
1st (Include Morning SEL)	8:30 A.M.-9:30 A.M.
2nd/3rd	9:35 A.M.-10:20 A.M.
Morning Brain Break	10:25 A.M.-10:40 A.M.
4th/5th	10:45 A.M.-11:30 A.M.
Lunch	11:35 A.M.-12:15 P.M.
6th/7th	12:20 P.M.-1:05 P.M.
Enrichment and Support for Periods 1 and 2/3	1:10 P.M.-2:05 P.M.
Enrichment and Support for Periods 4/5 and 6/7	2:10 P.M.-3:05 P.M.

SPS Childcare Plan-Alphabest

As many of you know, Suffolk Public Schools has partnered with Alphabest in order to provide childcare for students ages 4-12. Alphabest will be present in all eleven of our elementary schools and will utilize the following schedule:

Early Risers	
7:00 – 8:00	Arrival / Rotation Station Activities
8:00 – 8:30	Welcome, Morning Huddle, Yoga
8:30 – 8:40	Bathroom Break / Hand Sanitizing
8:40 – 9:15	Maker/Themed Activity
9:15 – 9:25	Clean up and Transition to Classroom or Learning Lab

AlphaAcademy	
9:30 – 10:30	Distance Learning 1
10:30 – 10:40	Bathroom / Hand Sanitizing
10:40 – 11:15	Outside Play / Recreation
11:15 – 11:25	Bathroom / Hand Sanitizing
11:25 – 11:45	Students Choice of: Quiet Time / Brain Games / Homework Help
11:45 – 12:15	Lunch
12:15 – 1:15	Distance Learning 2
1:15 – 1:45	Fitness Zone
1:45 – 2:30	Enrichment Zone: STEM, Art, World Language/Culture
2:30 – 2:40	Bathroom / Hand Sanitizing
2:40 – 3:30	Student Choice Clubs
3:30 – 4:00	Clean-up / Transition to After Hours

After Hours	
4:00 – 4:10	Bathroom / Hand Sanitizing
4:10 – 5:10	Enrichment Zone: Fitness/Wellness, STEM, Art, Maker or World Languages
5:10 – 5:40	Outside Play / Recreation
5:30 – 6:00	Clean-up / Wrap-up / Parent Pick-up

Our Suffolk Public Schools employees who have students in Suffolk Public Schools will have the first priority for registration, followed by our disenfranchised students, and finally Suffolk Public Schools employee children who live outside of the city of Suffolk. Registration for Alphabest child care will open the week of August 10, 2020-August 14, 2020. Childcare will begin on September 8, 2020, the first day of school.

SPS Meal Distribution

Similar to our summer meal distribution program, the Food and Nutrition Staff at Suffolk Public Schools will continue to provide meals to all students. Meal distribution will be on Tuesdays and Thursdays and will include multiple day breakfast and lunch packets. Meal distribution will be at designated school bus stops for all students and families. Suffolk Public Schools have allotted forty minute lunch windows for all levels in order to provide students an opportunity to obtain their lunch from the bus stop, and having plenty of time to eat.

2020-2021 Calendar Overview

As we plan for the entire 2020-2021 School Year, I wanted to provide a brief overview of my recommendations for *Educate and Innovate*, and hopefully a return to five days of face to face instruction.

1st Nine Weeks: September 8, 2020-November 2, 2020

- SPS will have virtual instruction for all students.
- SPS will monitor data and trends from the Virginia Department of Health and the City of Suffolk in order to assist the school division in our approach for a return to face to face instruction.
- Special Education Students who are in specialized programs will return to school four days a week for face to face instruction.

2nd Nine Weeks: November 4, 2020-January 29, 2021 (Tentative)

- SPS will move into a Hybrid model where students will attend school in the traditional Face to Face model for one or two days a week.
- Students will be divided into two or four cohorts.
- Students who utilize Suffolk Public Schools transportation must wear a mask while on the bus or in the car.
- SPS will continue to monitor data trends from the Virginia Department of Health and the City of Suffolk.
- Special Education Students who are in specialized programs will continue to attend school four days a week for Face to Face instruction.
- CCAP Students will also attend their Career and Technical Education classes twice a week for Face to Face instruction.

3rd Nine Weeks: February 1, 2021-April 14, 2021 (Tentative)

- SPS will return to our regular five days of Face to Face instruction.
- Students who utilize Suffolk Public Schools transportation must wear a mask while on the bus or in the car.
- SPS will continue to monitor data trends from the Virginia Department of Health and the City of Suffolk to determine if a move back to a hybrid model is necessary.

4th Nine Weeks: April 15, 2021-June 18, 2021 (Tentative)

- SPS will continue in our traditional model of five days of Face to Face Instruction
- SPS will continue to monitor data trends from the Virginia Department of Health and the City of Suffolk to determine if a move back to a hybrid model is necessary.

Thank you Suffolk Public Schools Community for your continued support as we navigate our way through these tough times, but we are fully prepared to support our students and staff in this new normal of education. I appreciate all of you, and like I have said previously, it is an honor to serve as your superintendent.

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