

August 7, 2020

Dear Parents:

I hope this finds you and your family to be well.

I know this is a time of uncertainty, especially considering the upcoming new school year. My goal with this letter is to inform you of decisions that the school board has made and what is being done to prepare for this new school year. Please take the time to read over ALL the information, as there is a lot to consider. Please know that we are guided by Maine's Department of Education (DOE) and the CDC; therefore the majority of the guidelines are mandated and not subject for negotiation.

Attached is a document that should provide you with all the details about what is happening at school to prepare for in-person learning; this Reopening Plan was approved by our school board last night. School at SCS is going to look very different than in the past, but this is what we must do in order to open our doors. There are requirements of you parents/guardians, especially when ensuring your children are healthy before coming to school each day. Although you will see in the document that we don't have ALL the answers yet, I will keep you updated as I am able.

Also approved at last night's board meeting was the revised school calendar (attached). Please discard of any old calendars you may have for this upcoming year, and replace them with this new one. This calendar was changed to allow for more professional development time before the start of school; therefore the STUDENTS' FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL IS TUESDAY, SEPT. 8th.

The school board also approved the plan to offer in-person learning on Mon, Tues, Thur and Fridays, with each Wednesday offering a remote component for ALL. The details of this are still to be determined, but the expectation is that there will be online teacher connections in the morning, and the afternoons on Wednesdays will allow faculty and staff to plan lessons and units of instruction for both in-person and remote learners. There is a lot of work ahead of us, and time is necessary for us to be able to meet the new demands.

The decision for remote Wednesdays was made for just the first trimester, which ends on November 20th. By then we hope to be able to assess the benefits and/or detriments of this plan, and a determination will be made about the subsequent trimesters. We hope that with this plan comes a midweek break to remove the masks (for both students and adults), and will allow for a midweek, deep sanitization of the school. Please know that we will also be conducting

routine cleanings throughout each school day when in-person learning is taking place.

## IN-PERSON, REMOTE LEARNING, HOMESCHOOLING...WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENCES, AND WHAT OPTIONS DO YOU HAVE?

I hope that by now you have a better understanding of what in-person learning is going to look like at SCS. What hasn't been explained, however, is the fact that we are going to be accessing our outdoors for learning, as much as possible. Presently, I'm awaiting a quote for the rental of tents, tables and chairs to put in the field area, making it easier to conduct work outside and to do so while meeting distance requirements. I'm also hoping to organize a workday to open up our paths to the outdoor classroom, and perhaps to build more benches for use in the woods. More news on this will be forthcoming.

Remote learning, should you choose this for your child/ren is going to be different than the Zoom meetings/lessons we conducted in the spring. Presently, we are looking into different remote learning curriculums that will best align with our in-person learning. It really is too soon to give you definite information about this right now, but I will keep you abreast of decisions as they are made. We don't think that live streaming of our in-person classes is likely to happen because of the fact that teachers and students will be wearing masks, which will adversely affect the audio clarity. We are, however, looking at multiple options.

Homeschooling would mean that parents/guardians elect to unenroll their children from the public school system, and opt to apply to the State DOE for homeschooling approval. For more information...<https://www.maine.gov/doe/search/node?keys=homeschool> .

In order for us to plan accordingly, we are asking parents/guardians to make a decision about their child's educational plan for this first trimester and informing us by Friday, August 21st. I will be sending out a very brief survey to you all, asking you to make this determination by 8/21. We are asking that rather than having a child attend school in-person a day here and there, you make the commitment for the whole trimester. Having this information allows us to assign staff accordingly, and allows teachers to prepare for the best possible outcomes for learning.

It is likely that the plans and information I am sharing with you today will continue to change; however, I am committed to keeping you informed, so I ask that you check your emails routinely. I am also going to be sending this same information through the post so you will have a hard copy of it all.

Thank you for taking the time to give all this careful consideration. Please be in touch with questions or concerns you may have, and I will get back to you as soon as possible. Meanwhile, be well and stay safe.

Best,

*Lisa M. Clarke*