

**Town Hall Meeting  
August 20, 2020  
FAQ**

**Q. Will outside providers be able to work in the building (e.g. therapists)?**

We will be limiting the amount of visitors that are permitted in the building. We will allow some visitors, especially outside therapists.

**Q. How will the hybrid schedule be created, and will parent input be considered?**

We will do our best to accommodate parent feedback into all of our plans.

**Q. If the hybrid model continues, what will happen in weeks where a holiday may occur? (I.E. – Columbus Day) Will those students attend Mon.-Tues. attend in person on Wednesday?**

We need to keep Wednesday open for deep cleaning. I would not propose altering the schedule for Monday holidays, for example. There was recent guidance that we can count remote learning on snow days as school days.

**Q. Will students be able to bring lunches from home?**

Yes, students are asked to continue following the wellness policy guidelines, especially as it relates to food allergies.

**How will the cohorts be chosen/organized?**

Staff will begin working on organizing the cohorts after August 24th.

**Q. I decided to do remote learning for my daughters, how do I go about it?**

Teachers will begin parent outreach after August 24th and before September 5th.

**Q. How many students are expected on site when school opens?**

We have approximately 130 students attending PCS in a typical year.. If all students participate in the hybrid model, there would be approximately 65 students on site each day. That number may fluctuate somewhat, depending on the number of students participating in a full remote model.

**Q. Can you provide more information about what the hybrid students will be doing on their days at home?**

Specific lesson plans will be posted on either Monday morning or daily depending on the classroom teacher.

**Q. Will there be lunch provided?**

Yes, lunch will be provided, as always, to students who request it.

**Q. Would first grade remote learners have the same teacher as the in person learners, or a different staff member?**

Yes, as of right now our PCS teachers will be teaching both in person and remote learning students. All lessons that are created are going to be appropriate for students in person and remote learning.

**Q. Can we request which days we send our children?**

Specific requests can certainly be sent to the principal. We will do our best to accommodate parent requests, but we can not guarantee the request. We can guarantee that siblings will be in the same cohort.

**Q. What will be the attendance policy this year with the limited number of in-school days and how will attendance be marked on virtual days? Will students be marked tardy for in-school sessions and parents will be signing them into school in these situations.**

We will be tracking attendance. Students will be expected to log in and complete their assignments in a timely manner. Some assignments may be provided live, and some may be pre recorded. Students who are unable to participate in hybrid learning days or remote learning day must report their absence to the main office as outlined in our handbook.

**Q. What will be the procedures if students/staff are exposed to Covid-19? Positive Test? Contact with someone that received a positive test?**

We will be following the Department of Education Guidance on Covid-19 exposure and positive testing. Our local BOH will be responsible for the contact tracing. Our school nurse will work in conjunction with the local BOH to ensure that local and state policies are adhered to.

**Q. Will school choice students still have an opportunity to ride the bus?**

At this time, no. We need to be able to provide bus transportation to Petersham residents before we can offer transportation to school choice families. The DESE guidance significantly reduced the safe transportation of students by about 60%. If we can safely transport Petersham residents and offer the Briggs Road School Choice stop we will reconsider that.

**Q. If grades are split in half, will students know who is in their cohort prior to the start of school**

We won't make a public post of the cohorts, but parents will be notified well in advance of the first day of school.

**Q. What towns does this represent?**

Petersham Center School represents a number of towns. We welcome school choice families from many surrounding communities. We also have staff from many neighboring communities.

**Q. How will you ensure that kids are learning a full years worth of material (or as close as possible) this school year?**

We are focused on time on learning guidance of 850 hours per school year. We will need to modify the amount of content that is taught this year. We will be focused on the DESE Priority Standards that were released in the spring.

**Q. How will lunch be conducted?**

We will follow the state's guidance on safe cafeteria management. Students will sit with 6 feet of social distancing while they eat lunch. We will eat outside if the weather permits, as much as possible.

**Q. Will students have recess?**

We will have recess outdoors weather permitting. On days that weather does not permit outdoor recess, we will look at safe alternatives where kids can spread out and take their masks off.

**Q. Will cohorts change or remain the same throughout the duration?**

I anticipate that the cohorts will stay the same throughout the year. We are asking that parents not request a change mid semester. Parents can move from hybrid to full remote if it becomes necessary for Covid related reasons at any time during the school year.

**Q. Are there teachers who won't be returning in September?**

As of 8/19/20, all staff members are returning in September. It's possible that some may not return to in person teaching due to Covid related reasons.

**Q. Are they going to be able to use chromebook?**

Yes, each student will have a chromebook for learning. Students who do hybrid learning will be expected/required to bring it back and forth to school safely.

**Q. What are the expected times throughout the day that virtual sessions will be conducted, and will these sessions be conducted by their grade-level teacher? What will in-person students be doing during this time if teachers are conducting virtual sessions?**

This will vary by grade and subject. These exact grade level expectations will be posted weekly.

**Q. Where will masks breaks be? What's the procedure?**

Yes, teachers will be scheduling mask breaks periodically throughout the day. We will be following the DESE guidance on mask breaks.

**Q. When will we know which cohort our child is in?**

I'm hopeful that cohorts can be completed and announced by August 29th.

**Q. How much time will be expected for self-directed learning during virtual school days?**

That will vary by grade level and subject. Students should expect to participate a full day of remote learning each day that they are home. The lessons will be a combination of live and pre recorded sessions. This time could also include reading, journaling, and project based learning for example. It will NOT be all screen based activities.

**Q. Will reading and math be the focus for in person instruction?**

We will focus on the priority standards as outlined by DESE in the spring of 2020. .

**Q. Can students bring their own hand sanitizer?**

We will be providing approved hand sanitizer for each classroom to use.

**Q. How much time will in-person students be outside through-out the day and will any classes be conducted outside throughout the day?**

Outdoor learning spaces, outdoor snack, outdoor lunch, and outdoor recess is strongly encouraged by DESE (weather permitting and when appropriate).

**Q. Will my child participate in specials when in person?**

We are still looking at the DESE guidance on specials. We are planning to provide specials in some form, but it will not be in the traditional way that it's occurred in the past.

**Q. Are backpacks allowed? Water bottles? Everything typical of a "normal" school year?**

Backpacks will be allowed. Water bottles are encouraged as the water fountains will not be open. Water filling stations will be available.

**Q. Who will teach the full remote model?**

The classroom teacher will be providing lessons that can be done by students in the remote learning academy. Staff members will be doing family outreach each week to assist families in need. Each classroom teacher will be available for virtual office hours on Wednesday.

**Will MCAS be conducted this year?**

As of now, the MCAS will be held in the spring of 2021. That is subject to change, but it is scheduled.

**Q. Broadband internet might not be complete for many families by the start of school - how will you work with those without reliable internet or internet at all?**

We will work with families that have broadband challenges. We will provide paper based activities that can be done at home without internet access.

**Q. Will the grade level curriculum be adjusted to focus on content that was not covered last year?**

We will spend some time at the beginning of the school year conducting formal and informal assessments to determine what gaps students may have. All students will have some challenges and we will work throughout this entire year to identify and address those challenges through a variety of curriculum interventions.

**Q. What will be the daily safety procedures conducted by students/staff/custodians/and outside personnel?**

The Department of Education has put out a series of safety guidance documents related to cleaning, bathroom usage, etc. We will follow this guidance. We will also work with our local Board of Health to ensure that we follow their policies and protocols.

**Q. What will protocols/discipline procedures look like if students are not following safety guidelines?**

We will follow the protocols that are outlined in our school handbook. As with any situation, student misconduct will be handled on a case-by-case basis. Students who are unable or unwilling to wear a mask will be asked to wear a face shield. Students who are unable or unwilling to wear a face shield and/or a facemask may be asked to transfer to the full remote learning platform. Some students may not be able to wear a mask due to medical/emotional/behavioral special needs and those will be considered in any decision making. Parents will also be involved in all discussions about mask wearing or refusal.