



# Livingston

## PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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### Spring Forward at LPS 2021!

*Our Blueprint to Increase In-person Learning for all Students*

#### 1. What is the plan for allowing our schools to open for additional in-person instruction?

Our “Spring Forward at LPS” plan outlines a specific pathway to provide students an opportunity for additional in-person instruction this school year. There are some steps we are ready to take immediately, and others that will happen over the coming weeks. We ultimately plan to have all of our elementary school students able to access in-person instruction five days per week for full days, and to have our secondary students back in-school for more and extended in-person days. This plan sets a pathway for the Livingston Public Schools to return to school in September 2021 for full days, five days per week, at all levels.

##### GRADES K-2:

- **March 15:** All students who have indicated a hybrid learning option on last week’s commitment form **will return five days per week for in-person learning from 8 a.m. until 12:45 p.m.**
- **No Later than May 10:** All in-person elementary students will move to a **full-day**, five day per week schedule.

##### GRADES 3-5:

- **April 5:** All students who have indicated a hybrid learning option on last week’s commitment form **will return five days per week for in-person learning from 8 a.m. until 12:45 p.m.**
- **No Later than May 10:** All in-person elementary students will move to a **full-day**, five day per week schedule.

##### GRADES 6-12:

- **March 4:** Secondary commitment form will be sent to families.
- **March 8:** Commitment form submissions are due.
- **Week of March 15:** The Secondary Plan will be communicated to students and parents.
- **April 5:** Implement the new Secondary Plan. See the options below that are being considered. Keep in mind that the commitment form results are essential in making this decision:
  - Increase the number of students in school each day by overlapping cohorts
  - Move to an AM/PM cohort schedule

**2. If I chose the *all remote* option for my child, can I change my mind?**

There will be one more opportunity to choose the hybrid learning option for elementary students **before May 3, 2021**; *however, it will be based on space availability*. Secondary students will have one more opportunity as well, **before March 8, 2021**.

**3. Why are the Grade K-2 students coming in five days a week on March 15th and the Grade 3-5 students on April 5th?**

We elected to prioritize our youngest students to return first particularly since their in-person student numbers were the most manageable and we could accommodate the larger groups in bigger spaces within the schools while still adhering to recommended social distancing measures.

More than 80% of elementary families elected to return to in-person learning for the Spring; this represents an increase of more than 10% from our current in-person numbers. Consequently, many cohorts have few to no students selecting remote learning. This means that we need to be cognizant of the impact that has on the number of students in the classroom. The numbers of students are greatest at the upper elementary grades district-wide. As classrooms at this level will be significantly more populated when we move to one cohort, we need time to address logistics and ensure a safe environment.

**4. What is the plan for allowing our secondary schools to open for additional in-person instruction (Grades 6-12)?**

On March 4<sup>th</sup>, we will ask for a commitment from secondary parents (Grade 6-12) regarding their intention of sending their children back to school after **April 5, 2021**. This feedback will allow us to determine the ways in which we can bring students back into school with more consistency on **April 5, 2021**.

Decisions will be made prior to spring break, allowing us time to adequately prepare classrooms, adjust transportation routes, and other details that need to be completed prior to returning more students to school at the same time.

At this time, we plan to either increase classroom capacity by overlapping cohorts on assigned days **or** move to AM and PM cohorts, allowing all students to present daily for part of the school day.

**5. Why is the district not bringing students back for full days at this time?**

The primary mitigation measure recommended by the Department of Health, the CDC, and the Department of Education is masking. Students would need to be unmasked for lunch, and six feet apart. Our cafeterias do not currently have the space to allow this to happen, and we will be using some of our larger spaces to get our students back into school for more in-person instructional time.

Additionally, as we bring more students back to school, it will be difficult to provide the needed distancing and the supervision required of students in the classroom, if we allowed eating in the classroom. After April break, we will reassess our ability to navigate the logistics of lunch during the pandemic. As the weather gets warmer, we will be able to utilize outdoor spaces to accommodate mask breaks, lunch, and recess. We plan to announce our next pivot to full day schedules at our elementary schools once the weather improves and outdoor lunch is a possibility.

## 6. What factors are we considering as we put forward this plan?

This plan sets an ambitious goal of significantly expanding in-person learning. As we expand in-person learning, it may be that some spaces do not allow for a full six feet of social distancing, as such, the district is committed to adding layers to our mitigating measures. These measures in conjunction with the increased number of staff who are vaccinated and the decreasing number of cases in our region allow us to continue to prioritize the safety and health of our school community.

Factors considered in our planning as in-person learning is expanded after Spring Break:

- Teachers will have had the opportunity to be vaccinated.
- Windows will be able to be opened in classrooms more comfortably.
- We will supply plastic dividers for desks at the elementary level to create additional barriers.
- Tents will return to our schools providing additional opportunities for outdoor learning, snacks, and mask breaks.
- Time for community and regional cases to decline further.

## 7. What conditions could change this plan?

**We intend to hold to this plan.** Nonetheless, if the NJDOH provides new guidance or the NJ COVID-19 Activity Level Report indicates a significant fluctuation in the pandemic, we will reassess the plan, and make any changes necessary. Any changes will be made with a goal of maximizing in-person instruction and social opportunities for students and will be communicated to the LPS community as soon as possible.

## 8. Will we be working to help teachers get vaccinated?

While developing this plan we received the significant news that educators will be eligible to receive COVID-19 vaccinations beginning March 15, 2021. We are actively working to help our staff members schedule appointments to receive the vaccine and access this important step to our collective recovery. The district, in partnership with the Livingston Education Association, has contacted a healthcare provider who is willing to come on site and administer vaccinations to employees. Additionally, there is a group of volunteers in Livingston who have assisted members of the community with scheduling appointments. We are working with this group as well to help staff members schedule appointments.

## 9. How will this impact Parent Teacher Conferences?

Elementary School parent/teacher conferences will be postponed until the week of April 26, 2021 to allow for a smooth operation during the transition associated with our new hybrid model.

## 10. What are we doing to further enhance the social connections for our students?

The Board of Education and administration conducted focus groups at every level (elementary school through high school) from mid-February through the beginning of March. The clear message that came through from all of the groups was that children are missing out most on social connections with other children. We will emphasize in-person clubs, meetings, and events over the final quarter of the school year. There will be multiple opportunities for end-of-the-year events and activities. Our parent organizations have been great partners in this regard, and we believe that they will also help to create and enhance opportunities for social connections.

**11. Will an all-remote option remain in place?**

Yes, through the end of the 2020-2021 school year in accordance with [Governor Murphy's Executive Order 175](#).

**12. What resources can our community utilize?**

[Travel Guidance](#) for New Jersey residents has been updated as of February 17, 2021.  
[Quarantine guidance after vaccination](#) has also been issued.  
[Livingston Public Schools COVID-19 Dashboard](#)

**13. What is the plan for the 2021-2022 school year?**

We plan to welcome our students and staff back to school for full day, in-person instruction in September.

*We will update this FAQ with additional information in the coming weeks.*