

**Frank I. Brown Elementary School
37 Highland Avenue
South Portland, ME 04106**

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August 26, 2020

Dear Brown School Parents and Guardians,

As a summer of planning, decision making, and consequently even more planning comes to an end, I want to review some important information that was shared during school board meetings, community forums, or by Superintendent Kunin through email, as well as a few building specific updates that you may find beneficial when planning for your child’s return this school year.

Hybrid Model- “Yellow Plan”

The district will be opening this fall under the Yellow (hybrid) level, as outlined in [South Portland’s Pandemic Response Plan](#). This model places students in either A or B cohorts, with cohort A attending in person on Monday and Thursday, and cohort B attending on Tuesday and Friday (schedule below). By now, you all should have received your child’s cohort placement, but please do not hesitate to contact me if that is not the case.

When not attending school in person, there will be distance learning opportunities for the students. The [SPSD Returning to School Framework](#) gives an overview of the instruction and expectations under the hybrid model. This document also describes the fully distance option that will be available to families this upcoming school year. If you have any questions regarding distance learning that were not addressed in the framework document, please let me know. If you are opting to have your child participate in the fully distance option, but anticipate sending them back in person this year, you will be encouraged to wait until the end of the first trimester (December 4th) before doing so.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Cohort A	In Person Instruction	Distance Learning	Whole Class Google Meet with Classroom Teacher Distance Learning	In Person Instruction	Distance Learning
Cohort B	Distance Learning	In Person Instruction		Distance Learning	In Person Instruction
Fully Distance Option	Synchronous sessions with special area teachers on A/B rotation, and individualized competency-based instruction through an online platform				

School Calendar

During the School Committee meeting on August 5th, the board approved the [revised calendar](#) for the 2020-2021 school year. Based on the hybrid model, the first student days are as follows:

- Grades 1-5 Cohort A- Thursday, September 10th
- Grades 1-5 Cohort B- Tuesday, September 8th
- Kindergarten Cohort A- Monday, September 14th
- Kindergarten Cohort B- Tuesday, September 15th

As noted in the chart above, all students will have a whole class Google Meet with their classroom teacher on Wednesdays. The first whole class Google Meet session for Grades 3-5 will be on September 16th, and the first session for Grades K-2 will be on September 23rd. In addition to the district's school calendar, you can also view building-specific dates and upcoming events on the calendar on the front page of [Brown's website](#).

Arrival and Dismissal

Student drop off is between 8:45 and 9:05 a.m. There is no supervision or building access before 8:45 a.m., and students must remain in their cars until that time. When students arrive, they will be greeted by a staff member and directed inside the building to their classrooms. There is no morning recess or access to the playground before the school day. The South Portland Rec Department has reserved Brown's grounds before and after school until 6 p.m. daily.

Dismissal this year will occur between 2:45 and 3:05 p.m. In hopes of decreasing both vehicle and pedestrian traffic, there will be two waves of dismissal for students being picked up or walking. The first dismissal will be at 2:45 p.m., and the second at 3:05 p.m. I am asking parents to choose one dismissal time and commit to it for the remainder of the school year. If you are able and willing, it would be greatly appreciated if you would consider the 2:45 p.m. wave.

Please complete this [Transportation Survey](#) by Monday, August 31st to indicate how your child will be arriving and leaving school daily. Your response will help us to prepare our procedures accordingly.

Devices

Devices will be distributed to all students in grades K through 5. Kindergarten, first, and second grade will receive tablets, and third, fourth, and fifth grade will receive Chromebooks. The students will be learning how to operate these devices in school before taking them home. Your child's classroom teacher will give you a general idea of when this transition will occur after introducing the devices and learning platforms. If you have a device from the spring, please hold onto it until you receive more information about the return process.

Masks

As Superintendent Kunin shared through email on August 19th, the Maine Department of Education requires that all students and staff wear a face mask to attend school. In addition, neck gaiters, masks with exhaust valves, and bandana style face coverings will not be permitted. If able, please send your child to school with two masks daily (one spare). However, disposable or cloth backup masks will be available for students who need them. Face coverings belonging to students will go home for cleaning/laundry each day. If your child is unable to wear a mask due to health reasons, a face shield is an acceptable alternative with a doctor's note. There will be regular opportunities for students to take off masks throughout the day, but if you have not already done so, I encourage you to begin building up your child's comfort level with mask-wearing prior to the start of school.

Supplies

We will be providing individual supplies for each student to use in the classroom. If you purchased fun back to school items for your children, then please keep them at home for use during distant learning days. We can also not accept donations of cleaning supplies and sanitizer. The only items that your child should bring to school are a backpack, water bottle, snack, change of clothes, and weather-appropriate outdoor wear. A refillable water bottle is essential this year, because all of the water fountains have been turned off throughout the building. Your child's classroom teacher will let you know in their welcome letters if any additional classroom specific items are needed.

Welcome Letters/Emails

All of the classroom teachers will be sending out welcome letters/emails to their students on August 27th. These letters will be your introduction to your child's teacher for the 2020-2021 school year. Also included in these letters will be more information on...

Virtual Back to School Night

Brown Elementary will be hosting a Virtual Back to School Night on Thursday, September 3rd. Typically, our Back to School Meet and Greet allows students and families to see the classroom, meet the teacher, and reconnect with a few familiar faces. The Virtual Back to School Night will do just that! The event will take place using Google Meet and will be from 4:30-6:00 p.m. with the following schedule.

- Kindergarten and First Grade- 4:30-5 p.m.
- Second and Third Grade- 5-5:30 p.m.
- Fourth and Fifth Grade- 5:30-6 p.m.

During your child's scheduled time, the student and their family is invited to sign into their class's Google Meet (links will be sent in the welcome letter), meet their teacher, see who is in their class, and get a look into their classroom. Beth Dolley (School Counselor), Jen Hayward (School Nurse), and I will also be available from 4:30-6 p.m. at the following link to answer any school-wide questions. Please feel free to "drop by" with your child and say hello. The link can be found on the front page of the Brown School website and included below.

meet.google.com/srb-kwxw-qsr

[Join by phone](#)

(US) +1 219-208-4361 PIN: 900 894 628#

Kindergarten Orientation

The kindergarten teachers will be reaching out to all incoming K families to set up a time prior to the start of school for an individual Google Meet session. This session will serve as a basic screener, and will be used to answer any questions or concerns that you may have regarding your child's kindergarten year.

Additional Safety Measures

Superintendent Kunin shares information regarding district-wide safety measures through his weekly News Notes. In addition, I highly recommend watching the August 17th School Board meeting for a thorough overview of the planning going into this school year. The recording for this meeting can be found [here](#).

At Brown, there have been hand sanitizer stations and motion activated paper towel dispensers installed throughout the building, as well as sinks installed in classrooms that did not have sinks previously. In every classroom, desks and tables are set up with at least six feet between students. The students will also be eating breakfast, snack and lunch in their classrooms, ensuring that they remain six feet apart when unmasked.

As you may know from Superintendent Kunin's communication, the district engaged with an Environmental Services firm with expertise in air quality and ventilation to assess every building. Brown School passed the assessment, without needing any updates to our current system. We did however, proceed with a recommendation to change our HVAC systems to run as "occupied" 24 hours a day to increase air exchange.

We will also be utilizing outdoor learning opportunities as much as possible this fall. The district is providing each school with a 40' x 40' tent, and we have identified numerous other areas of the school grounds that will be dedicated for instruction. We are currently in the process of determining procedures for outdoor use of learning spaces, which is actually more complex than you would think, but I look forward to having this option available to our teachers.

This school year will certainly look different than others, but through thoughtful planning and consideration, I have no doubt that we will be able to provide a safe and meaningful year for all of our students. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me with any questions or concerns as we continue along this process.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Alexis Jones". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

Alexis Jones