



July 24, 2020

Dear Portland Public Schools Families,

*I hope you all are finding safe ways to relax and enjoy some of this summer. I am writing to update you on our plans for school reopening as part of our commitment to keep you informed. We are working on finalizing a detailed plan for approval by the Portland Board of Public Education in mid-August and encourage your feedback beforehand.*

*The Maine Department of Education (MDOE) recently provided a [Framework for Returning to Classroom Instruction](#) that includes evidence-based factors to help inform local districts' reopening decisions. MDOE plans to make its first posting of a color-coded health advisory system for each county on July 31 and every two weeks thereafter. This MDOE guidance framework also includes required school measures for health and safety. Under any school reopening scenario, students and staff **MUST** wear masks or other face coverings, practice physical distancing and screen for symptoms each day.*

*A district-wide full remote learning option will be provided for families who choose not to have their students participate in any in-person schooling. Beyond that, we are considering three scenarios aligned with the state's evidence-based reopening levels:*

- *Green: All students attend full time, following the required state health and safety protocols of mask wearing, physical distancing, and daily symptom checks.*
- *Yellow: A hybrid scenario that limits the time or number of students in person at school depending on grade level, and following the required state health and safety protocols of mask wearing, physical distancing, and daily symptom checks.*
  - *PK-5: We are exploring two scenarios.*
    - *A hybrid scenario with students attending school in person 2 days per week and participating remotely 3 days. Community partners will provide care or programming for students on those days when they are not in school.*
    - *A scenario where all of our PK-5 grade students return to school.*
  - *6-8: A hybrid scenario with students attending school in person 2 days per week and participating remotely 3 days.*
  - *9-12: A hybrid scenario with all ninth-graders attending school in person 2 days per week and participating remotely 3 days. Students in grades 10-12 would continue to learn remotely but have access to in-person supports for academics and social emotional needs.*
- *Red: Full remote learning with consistent schedules and learning experiences for everyone, except students with low-incidence special education needs. Those students would attend an in-person Essential School, following state health and safety protocols.*

*You will be receiving a survey on Monday, July 27, asking you to let us know if you plan to send your child back under the yellow or green scenarios or would rather opt out and have your child continue remote learning. The survey will be open until midnight on Sunday, Aug 2.*

*Across all scenarios, we have integrated feedback as we worked to improve the learning experience for all students. This includes the establishment of learning advisors to work with students, families and staff, daily live instruction for each model, and built-in training and support for families, students and staff. We will meet the state's health and safety requirements, including upgraded ventilation and leveraging outdoor spaces. We are also working with our community partners to ensure that we have extended day options for working families.*

*Next week, we are holding focus groups with groups of parents from the School Board's Family Partnership Advisory Committee, Portland Empowered, Equity For Portland Schools and the Portland Public Schools PTO Coalition to get feedback on our plans. We'll also have a focus group with a representative cross section of our multilingual families.*

*We plan to present a full update of our reopening scenarios to the School Board on Tuesday, Aug. 4. There will be an opportunity for public comment then. The Board is expected to make a decision on which scenario to adopt this fall at its Aug. 18 meeting after we have the latest information about Cumberland County's standing in the state's color-coded advisory reports.*

*The decisions facing the district about reopening are challenging, but with staff, families and students working together, we can provide a good learning experience for all. I'll be updating you again in early August, with more specifics about our plans after our School Board meeting.*

*Sincerely,*

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'X Botana', written over a horizontal line.

**Xavier Botana, Superintendent**