



# COVID-19 Closure Update

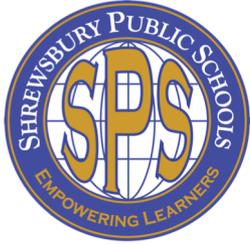
A presentation to the School Committee

*April 22, 2020*



# Key Messages

- 1) The **health & well-being** of students, families, & staff is **priority #1**.
- 2) This is an extraordinary time in history, and **everyone in our community has a collective responsibility** to respond to this challenge.
- 3) Even though our schools are closed, **we continue to support our students, families, and staff** from a distance and **empower continued student learning**.



## Key Fact

- Per Governor Baker's order given yesterday, **all Massachusetts public & private PreK-Grade 12 schools are closed for the remainder of the current school year.**



# What does being closed for the rest of the year mean?

- The SPS Remote Learning program will be further refined and continue through the last scheduled day of school, which is Tuesday, June 16.
- Approach to year-end tasks and preparation for next year needs to be adjusted accordingly (grading of students; schedule and class creation for next year; personnel processes such as hiring & evaluation; budget process; etc. – many of these are interdependent)



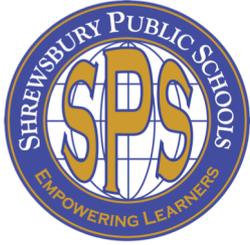
# What does being closed for the rest of the year mean?

- All scheduled in-person events and activities will need to be either canceled (concerts, academic & athletic competitions, etc.) or restructured (graduation, awards ceremonies, etc.)
- Logistical planning for safe return of technology, textbooks, etc. at the end of the year, as well as retrieving personal items from school buildings



# What does being closed for the rest of the year *mean*?

- We need to do everything we can to engage students in order to address their well-being and help them learn
- We need to provide support for our staff to address their well-being and help them support and teach our students
- We need to provide support to families to address their well-being and help them support their children



# What does being closed for the rest of the year *mean*?

- We need to continuously adapt to the evolution of the pandemic in order to determine how we might best approach summer programming and the eventual return to school (which will likely be very different than “typical” school)
- We need to determine how our educational programming might need to flex and change when in-person school resumes, both in order to effectively counter the impact of this long-term physical closure of schools and to respond to potential additional school closures over the coming year, depending on how the pandemic evolves

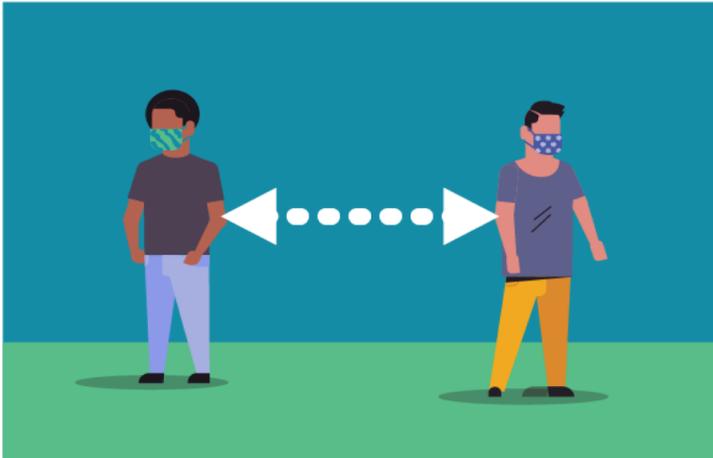


# What does being closed for the rest of the year *mean*?

- We need to find suitable, alternative ways to honor our students, especially our graduating seniors at SHS whose traditional ceremonies and activities have been compromised by the pandemic
- We need to find ways to help students, staff, and families continue to adapt to the new realities we are facing
- This is not a race or a competition. This is a challenge to meet.

# Department of School Nursing Update

- Social (Physical) Distancing reminder



- Update on collaboration with Central Mass Regional Public Health Alliance

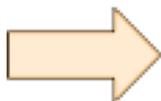


# Information Technology Department

- Devices for families in need
  - 81 Wi-Fi iPads
  - 12 Cellular iPads
- G Suite for Education accounts created for PK-2 students
- Seesaw for Schools (PK-Gr. 4), Schoology (Gr. 3-Gr. 12)
- IT staff providing tech support for students, staff, and families
  - [parenttechsupport@shrewsbury.k12.ma.us](mailto:parenttechsupport@shrewsbury.k12.ma.us)
- Scheduled drop-off and pick-up windows for devices in need of repair

# We're in this together.

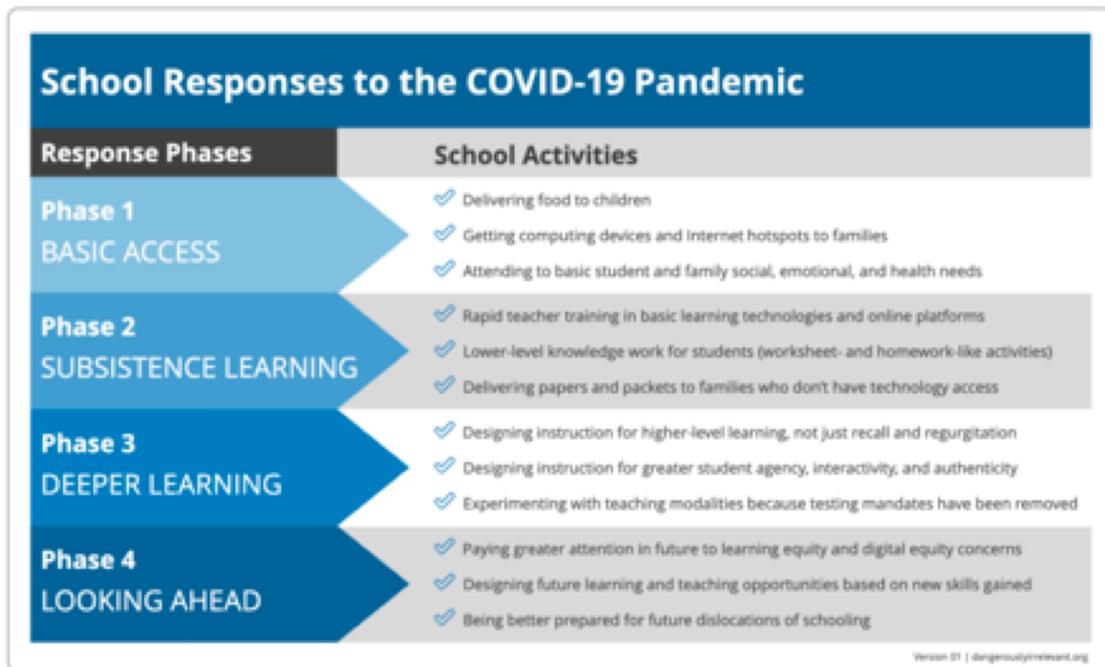
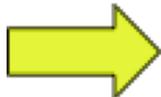
We are here



And here



& here



# Remote Learning Recap

## 3 Messages:

- We are here to support students academically and socially.
- Educators are focused on reviewing essential skills and teaching new content
- We expect to see all students completing assignments & participating with their teachers during “live” sessions

“

School is NOT closed  
for the year. The building is.

—  
If you listen closely you can hear the hum of hard working  
teachers, administrators, and support staff.

**Yes, we are brokenhearted,  
but these broken hearts will lead.**

edutopia

Peyton Anderson, Educator

# Supporting Students: “Office Hours”

## Important at ALL levels:

“Chats” to check in

Break out groups

A way to share work and progress as well as questions



# Supporting Educators: Professional Development

## Teachers are learners, too.

- New platforms
- New features
- New tools

*“All across the world, educational systems are exploring new ways to encourage more ambitious teaching and learning in classrooms: shifting away from recitation and rote learning to more engaging forms of collaborative, active, problem-centered learning. For this shift in classrooms to occur, we need to dramatically increase the quantity and quality of learning opportunities available to educators in these systems, and new forms of blended and online learning experiences will be central to this growth.”*

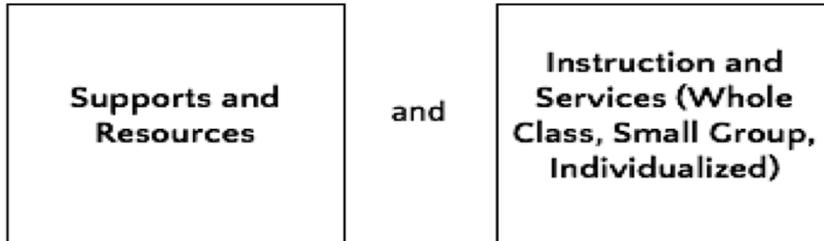
**-Justin Reich**  
Assistant Professor, MIT  
Director of the MIT Systems Lab

# Student Services Update

1. Alternative Plan to address student needs
2. Remote Service Plans for over 1,000 students
3. Virtual Meetings



## Models of Remote Service Delivery



# Virtual Meetings



Shrewsbury Core Subject Schedule - Grades K, 1, & 2

Estimated Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
30 minutes	English Language Arts	English Language Arts	English Language Arts	English Language Arts	English Language Arts
15 minutes	Special Subjects	Special Subjects	Special Subjects	Special Subjects	Special Subjects
30 minutes	Math	Math	Math	Math	Math
15 minutes	Physical Activity	Physical Activity	Physical Activity	Physical Activity	Physical Activity
15 minutes	Science/Social Studies	Science/Social Studies	Science/Social Studies	Science/Social Studies	Weekly Reflection



# Early Childhood Transition

- School districts should be attending virtual Transition Planning Conferences
- School districts should continue to accept referrals from EI programs
- School districts can review EI assessments in considering eligibility
- IEP Team may decide to use an IFSP for the first year of the special education services after the child turns three
- Collaborate with families and EI providers



# DESE Guidance



## Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

35 Pleasant Street, Boston, Massachusetts 02114-4901 Telephone: (781) 338-8000  
TDD: (781) 338-8000 Fax: (781) 338-0279

Jeffrey C. Holm  
Commissioner

April 9, 2020

Dear Families and Guardians:

During this period of extended school closures, we recognize this is a difficult time for families, guardians, and caregivers. We understand that one of your concerns is how your children with disabilities will continue to receive support and services from schools while they are closed due to the public health emergency related to COVID-19. During this unprecedented time, we appreciate that families and educators will work together to provide the best possible access to specific education instruction and services.

In this letter, I want to share important updates about what schools are doing to support your child during this time. The accompanying Family Resource Toolboxes provides some helpful information about resources and strategies for families.

On March 21, the U.S. Department of Education issued a [bulletin](#), clarifying that schools must continue to provide a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) to students with disabilities while protecting the health and safety of students, educators, and service providers. In these extraordinary circumstances, special education services will be provided differently than they are when school buildings are open and fully operational. Remote special education services should start immediately. You do not need to provide consent for remote services to begin. You should receive a plan about how the school will provide remote services.

In Massachusetts, remote learning for all students, including students with disabilities, should be provided using both:

1. **Supports and resources** for independent learning that can include academic content and homework packets and product-based learning opportunities, with the accommodations your child needs.
2. **Instruction and services** that can be delivered remotely in whole group and small group settings or individually. Instruction and services can be provided by using online programs, television, or the telephone.

Here are a few key ideas to keep in mind:

**Ongoing and regular communication between educators and families is important.** Your child's teacher and related service providers will be in regular contact with you. You and your child's teachers and related service providers should decide how often and what method of communication works best for you, discuss your child's individualized instruction, IEP goals and service needs and plan for how services can be provided remotely. Let your school team know what issues you are most concerned about for your child and tell them the best way to connect with you, whether it is by email, telephone, or other means.

**Your child may not receive individualized instruction and services the same way as they do when school is in session.** You and your child's teachers and school team can be creative in designing ways to provide remote learning opportunities, special education instruction and services. It may not be possible to provide hands-on or face-to-face therapies or instruction, given the public safety order for social distancing. Specialized instructional opportunities and related services can be modified or provided remotely for your child to receive FAPE. The

school should provide you with a remote learning plan, so you know the plan and schedule for your child to receive instruction, services, and other learning opportunities.

**Your child's IEP lists the supports and accommodations that help them succeed at school and you can also use them during daily activities at home.** The school will ensure that your child can access remote opportunities through appropriate accommodations. Review your child's IEP with your child's teacher to find your child's accommodations and understand how to use them at home. If you do not have a copy of the IEP, contact your child's teacher to arrange to have a copy sent to you or set up a time to discuss your child's IEP with your child's teacher on the phone.

**You can use assistive technology.** Examples include computers, software, communication devices, calculators, speech-to-text apps, and Cloud Captioning, and other specialized equipment to help your child learn at home. Your child's teacher and school leaders should contact you to work together about the best ways to incorporate these devices and technologies into your everyday life. If your child's specialized equipment is still at school, you can talk with your school leaders about how to get access to them.

**IEP Meetings can be held virtually while schools are closed.** Virtual IEP meetings are a good solution to comply with social distancing rules. You can participate in virtual IEP meetings by phone or video conferencing.

- If your child's annual IEP is due, we encourage you to work with your child's team to decide if it's possible to hold a virtual IEP meeting.
- When school reopens, your child's teachers will review your child's progress and hold an IEP meeting with you as necessary to determine the best next step.

**Contact your child's teacher or school leaders if you are having technical problems accessing remote instruction and resources.** Lifting one line item can be new for many families, and we recognize that parents may need technical support. Let the school know if you have questions or need assistance.

**If your child's approved private special education school is closed, educators from the approved special education school will reach out to you to determine how the school will continue to provide special education services remotely.** The approved special education school should provide you with a remote learning plan, so you know the plan and schedule for your child to receive instruction, services, and other learning opportunities.

**If your child has an IEP plan, your child's teacher and/or SIEP Coordinator should be in contact with you about how to provide accommodations or services as outlined on your child's IEP plan.** Your child's teacher should explain how to access the accommodations that your child needs on school assignments. If you have any questions, please contact your child's teacher or the SIEP Coordinator for your school.

Schools and districts have been identifying different ways to reach students and families. During the coming weeks, your child's teachers and school leaders will continue to develop and expand ways to provide remote special education services.

We encourage school leaders, teachers, and families to work together to find the best ways to support each child during this challenging time.

Sincerely,

Russell D. Johnson, PhD  
Senior Assistant Commissioner

## Legal Authorities for Timelines

- Three levels of legal requirements for timelines

1. Federal requirements in IDEA
2. State requirements in Mass. General Laws
3. DESE regulations (603 CMR 28.00) and policy

## Next Steps

- Consider anticipated guidance from the U.S. Department of Education
- Consult with stakeholders about
  - Good faith
  - What's reasonable now and when school returns
  - Equity and Racial Equity

# **SHS Student and Alumni Mentoring Program**

**Hosts: Kathleen Keohane, Michelle Biscotti  
and Jane Lizotte**

**Panelists: SHS Alumni**

**Participants: SHS Students (95 students are  
currently registered)**

**Featured Programs: 14 (listed on next slide)**

# Featured Programs

- Business & Finance
- Computer Science
- Engineering
- Film, TV & Video
- Law & Criminal Justice
- Liberal Arts, the Arts, & Humanities
- Transitioning from High School to College (2 sessions)
- Military and ROTC
- Real Estate
- Science & Medicine
- Teaching
- Venture Capital & Entrepreneurship
- Voice, Music & Theatre



tianyongwang



Charles Miles

Shreya Gattu

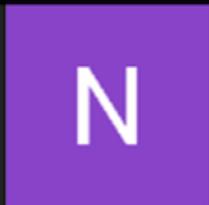
Arimita Padam



Andrew Kerekon

Sarah Bicalho

Karthikmohan Jala



Harika



Sandra Vishnu



Diya Satanur



# Rise Up Together with the Shrewsbury Community!

Are you ready to rock a Virtual 5K on the weekend of May 1st-3rd? We are hosting the “Rise Up Together Virtual 5K” for the entire Shrewsbury community. We miss our students, families, and staff so much! ***This is an opportunity to be together, though we are apart.***

**THANK YOU** to Lisa Arteca, Ann Jones, Jeff LaRose, Caryn Keenan, Maureen Pellizzari, Noelle Freeman and Jeff Lane for their leadership and coordination of this event!

# What is a Virtual 5K?

A virtual 5K is an opportunity to complete 3.1 miles of physical activity at anytime during the weekend of the event. Participants can walk, run, hike, bike, yoga, or engage in your favorite fitness activity! If you are not able to complete 3.1 miles, you can complete 30 minutes of any type of physical activity-inside or outside. There is no race route. Please make sure to practice social distancing.

- A Padlet link to upload pictures will be sent to all participants.
- All participants will receive a \$10 off coupon and will be entered into a drawing to win a prize from Sneakerama!

# Current Fiscal Year [FY20]

- The certainty of schools remaining closed for the remainder of the year, allows for several actions:
  - Implement a budget freeze, restricting further procurement to only “must have” supplies or services
  - Re-forecast expenditures from all funds to end of the fiscal year
  - Re-assess potential new Covid-19 related expenses for current fiscal year
- Topics for future discussion include:
  - School transportation amendment with AA Transportation
  - Tuition and fee-based programs
  - Pay continuity decisions for hourly staff

# Next Fiscal Year [FY21]

- The Town Manager plans to re-cast the FY21 Budget.
  - Re-forecast revenue projection
  - Reschedule the budget decision-making timeline with Annual Town Election and Annual Town Meeting postponed to later dates
- We can expect that the remaining budget gap we had “Pre Covid-19” of \$435,000 will now grow larger
- We can expect more staff and program reductions will be necessary

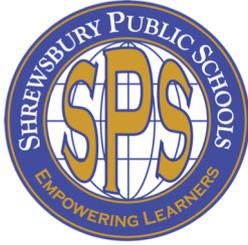


# Challenges & Hope

- We will continue to face formidable challenges both in the short term and for the foreseeable future – likely for at least the next two years
- We need to remember the Stockdale Paradox:

*You must maintain unwavering faith that you can and will prevail in the end, regardless of the difficulties, and at the same time, have the discipline to confront the most brutal facts of your current reality, whatever they might be.*

- Jim Collins, in *Good to Great*, regarding what he learned from Admiral James Stockdale



# Challenges & Hope

*The true antidote to fear is hope, not optimism. Hope comes from...bring(ing) out the best in people by inspiring collaboration, common purpose and future possibilities. It takes hope to overcome great fear and meet great challenges.*

- Dov Seidman, in an interview by Thomas Friedman, *New York Times*, April 21, 2020