



**PITTSFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS**  
**ADMINISTRATION CENTER**  
**269 FIRST STREET**  
**PITTSFIELD, MA 01201**

**Superintendent**  
**Jason P. McCandless, Ed. D.**  
[jmccandless@pittsfield.net](mailto:jmccandless@pittsfield.net)

**PRESS RELEASE**

For Immediate Release

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## **Pittsfield Public Schools Announce Transition Plans For In-Person Learning**

With schools serving as an important part of the infrastructure of communities, the timeline associated with the shift from online learning, to in-person classroom instruction, is impacted by many factors. Driven by reliable public health data, as well as considerations to the needs of our students, families, and staff, the Pittsfield Public Schools transition to in-person learning is anticipated to continue to shift towards a hybrid learning model in October.

While the current health pandemic creates fluid circumstances that result in plans being subject to change, the Pittsfield Public Schools are committed to providing our students, families, and staff the most up-to-date information regarding each phase of school re-openings.

With an understanding that school districts in Massachusetts, as well as the families they serve, have strong desires to implement realistic and detailed plans tied to how education is delivered to students in 2020-2021, the complexity of the circumstances create challenges that impact all stakeholders.

The capacity for schools to plan to reopen safely, as well as for students and families to plan to confidently return to school safely, are impacted by the complex demands of the COVID-19 health pandemic that are challenging every aspect of American life. These circumstances put schools, students, families, and communities in an unsettling - and seemingly impossible - position of trying to plan accordingly, and provide the necessary conditions for success, in the midst of period of time in which most plans are forced to be considered short-term and/or subject to change.

On September 15<sup>th</sup>, the Pittsfield Public Schools opened the 2020-2021 school year, offering education to our students via remote learning opportunities.

In recent weeks since the start of the 2020-2021 school year, a transition to in-person education, primarily for students in substantially separate educational programs, has already commenced. Students enrolled in Special Education, Vocational, and English Language Learner (ELL) curriculums have begun in-person learning, on our school campuses, as of September 28<sup>th</sup>.

With in-person learning already under way for a small portion of our student body, it is anticipated that students enrolled in traditional education curriculums will transition to a hybrid learning model, which includes in-person learning, between now and mid-October.

The anticipated timeline for shifting to the hybrid learning model requires specific health metrics to be monitored in order to proceed with in-person learning opportunities.

As determined by the weekly COVID-19 Public Health Report, in-person learning can, and will, proceed if the following metrics are maintained in Pittsfield and Berkshire County:

- A 14-Day Average Test Positivity Rate Of Less Than 3%
- A 14-Day Average Daily Incidence Rate Of Less Than 4 Per 100,000 In Pittsfield\Berkshire County

Students and families are encouraged to frequently visit the **Remote Learning Link** on the [www.pittsfield.net](http://www.pittsfield.net) website for the most up-to-date information on each phase of the return to in-person learning. Important information, timelines, and answers to frequently asked questions can be found at <https://sites.google.com/pittsfield.net/athomelearning>

In the short term, as the Pittsfield Public Schools continue the transition to in-person learning, some important items for students and families to note include:

### **Bus Transportation**

As the Pittsfield Public Schools prepares for students to return to school, it is important for the district to confirm the intentions of each student\family, associated with utilizing school bus transportation.

***Each of the 2,400+ students\families in Pittsfield eligible for bus transportation are required to complete an online bus transportation questionnaire by Thursday, October 1, 2020.***

For security purposes, the questionnaire has been emailed to each student’s email account.

***Parents\Guardians are expected to sign into their child’s email account to complete this form.***

Per state guidelines and PPS policy, a maximum of 25 students are allowed to ride on a school bus at any given time. Each student will be provided their own bus seat, and will be physically distanced from others. Masks are required to be worn at all times on buses. Bus windows will be open at all times.

Completion of the Bus Transportation questionnaire is required by October 1, 2020, as the responses play an important role in planning bus routes, schedules, and accommodations that will meet the needs of our students and families.

### **Anticipated In-Person Learning Start Dates**

As the Pittsfield Public Schools prepares for all students to transition to a hybrid model, which includes in-person learning as well as remote learning, the following dates serve as anticipated targets for resuming in-person learning on school campuses:

October 14	Grades PreK, K, 1, 2, 6, and 9	First Day of In-Person Learning
October 20	Grades 3, 4, and 5	First Day of In-Person Learning
October 27	Grades 7, 8, 10, 11 and 12	First Day of In-Person Learning

- Each PPS Student Will Be Assigned Individualized In-Person Learning Schedules

## **Anticipated Notification Regarding Individualized In-Person Learning Schedules**

As the Pittsfield Public Schools prepares for students to transition to a hybrid model, which includes in-person learning, students and families will receive information on individualized class schedules.

Students and families will be notified regarding individualized in-person class schedules and expectations by teachers and school administrators.

***Each of the students\ families eligible for in-person learning beginning on October 14<sup>th</sup>, will receive notification regarding their in-person class schedules on Thursday, October 8<sup>th</sup> or Friday, October 9<sup>th</sup>.***

## **Parent\Guardian Information Sessions**

As the Pittsfield Public Schools further prepares for students to commence in-person learning opportunities, the school district will be hosting multiple virtual meetings for parents and guardians.

These meetings will provide an overview regarding the student transition to the hybrid learning model.

### ***Parent\Guardian Informational Meetings Will Be Offered:***

***Tuesday      October 6<sup>th</sup>      7:00 PM***

***Tuesday      October 13<sup>th</sup>      7:00 PM***

Additional information, and registration, for parent\guardian informational meetings will be posted on [www.pittsfield.net](http://www.pittsfield.net). Parents and guardians are encouraged to register in advance, in an effort to provide the school district an opportunity to address questions and concerns that are most common amongst students and families.

## **Breakfast & Lunch**

Upon transitioning to in-person learning in the hybrid model, the Pittsfield Public Schools will provide breakfast and lunch to students in a “grab & go” bag.

## **PPS Virtual Academy**

All Students\ families that have registered for the PPS Virtual Academy have begun the 2020-2021 school year receiving education in their respective home schools.

Students that have enrolled in the PPS Virtual Academy will transition to the virtual learning academy commitments, as anticipated, by October 14<sup>th</sup>, 2020. For additional information about the Pittsfield Public Schools Virtual Academy, please contact Principal Carl Tillona at [ctillona@pittsfield.net](mailto:ctillona@pittsfield.net)

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**Additional press releases, associated with pertinent return to in-person learning information, will be made available as needed in the days to follow.**

The ongoing commitment, perseverance, and sacrifice that our students, families, and staff are making to facilitate education in Pittsfield will pave the way to returning to a sense of normalcy. As we re-envision the academic experiences of our student body during these unprecedented times, The Pittsfield Public Schools is grateful for the continued resiliency and spirit of our community.