

July 22, 2020 - Gateway Middle School Town Hall Complete Q&A

	Category	Question	Answer(s)
Distance Learning	Community/Social	Hi, my daughter is a transfer student to 8th grade, and I was wondering how she might meet other 8th grade students for community?	Orientation for new students - including transfer students - will be held the week of August 17. Orientation will take place virtually due to current state and local health recommendations that do not allow our campuses to be open.
		My daughter is wondering if there will be an opportunity to continue club meetings via Zoom.	We are working with faculty to determine how we can continue as many extracurricular activities as are feasible during distance learning.
		Will WEB volunteers (is that what they are called?) be part of the on-site new orientation?	Student orientation will now be online instead of in-person per public health guidelines, but we do plan to involve WEB volunteers as much as possible.
		Will new WEB leaders still be able to be part of the orientation process for the incoming 6th graders?	
		Any info as to how you are going to support these students' SEL growth during distance learning? Maybe middle school advisory groups?	All students will continue to meet with their advisory class to help build community and social and emotional skills. Teachers are also working to integrate social emotional learning into their classes, because we know this is important for learning, especially in a Distance Learning context.
		can you speak to how the incoming 6th graders will get to know each other socially?	Sixth graders will engage in a number of community and relationship building activities starting with their orientation, then continuing in each of their classes. We hope to build in opportunities for building relationships across the grade and school once Distance Learning is underway.
	Academics	Aviva wants to know about "advanced" learning. Not sure what she means by that. Maybe extra academic programs?	We encourage students looking for an additional challenge to reach out their teachers directly.
	Grading	how will grading work?	Details of grading for the 2020-2021 school year will be announced once Gateway receives guidance from the California Department of Education.
	Physical Education	what about Physical education?	Staff will be in touch when the year begins with details about how PE requirements can be fulfilled via distance learning
	Textbooks	Will textbooks be online?	Students will have all appropriate materials for each class; in many cases these materials will be online
	Zoom	How will students transfer classes on zoom? [Question was clarified to be: How will students move between classes on Zoom?]	Students will have different Zoom Rooms/log-in information for each class.
		Will live remote learning include group work with other students?	Group work is an important part of middle school learning and will be incorporated as much as possible during distance learning.
		how many hours of live time per day? Zoom	Students will be engaged in learning for at least four hours a day per the state guidelines, but the degree to which they are live and on zoom or another platform will vary.
		Will kids be required to turn on their cameras during Zoom learning. Will the school be checking in with parents to ensure all kids have a computer camera or iPhone?	Students will have access to a camera on their school-issued Chromebooks and requirements about camera usage are still being determined.
What about kids who don't handle virtual learning (Zoom) well? Will there be an option for distance learning without Zoom?		We know that Zoom, or live meetings with a camera, can be difficult for some students. We will work with students and families to create expectations that feel equitable and promote engagement.	
Will be looking forward to hearing more specifics about how much time will be synchronous learning (I believe one of the panelists said that "some of the distance learning will be synchronous"□). I hope it is as much as possible.	Students will be engaged in learning for at least four hours a day, but the degree to which they are live and on zoom or another platform will vary. There will be a greater degree of synchronous daily learning than in the Spring.		

	Technology/Laptops	Hi if my student has already has been assigned a laptop does he need to come in to switch out?	For the sake of consistency, all Gateway students will use school-provided, brand new laptops for distance learning. Students who still have older models from Spring 2020 will have the opportunity to swap for a new laptop.		
		Does the student have to get a laptop provided by Gateway or can use the one we have at home?			
		And is it Chromebook only?		Yes, computers are Chromebooks.	
		Is there a family communications platform (like Konstella)?		We use ParentSquare at Gateway. New families will receive an invite to join in mid-August.	
		can parents pick up laptops on our kids behalf or do they have to be present too?		Look out for the email from the school team with more information about laptop pickup	
		Will the students have an opportunity to have an orientation around new programs, resources/platforms installed on laptops before the school starts? Thank you.		Yes, look out for more information from the school closer to the start of the year.	
		How will new students like 6th grader start out on zoom will they be given a google classroom.		All Zoom and Google Classroom information will be provided at the new student orientation.	
		would it be possible to open Parentsquare beyond the parent to teacher communication, to enable parents to parents communication or even school-wide. It would be very useful during these times.	Parentsquare already has this feature enabled! Simply post in the "forum group" for your child's grade to communicate with other parents. This will be available after the school year begins.		
Hybrid Model	Cohort Scheduling	Taking the opportunity to craft my question now.....Thank you for this forum and for keeping everyone informed and safe! My question is about the eventual return to in-person instruction two days per week in the beginning: Will there be some opportunity for families to express cohort preferences? If students are doing some of their days at home, it would be incredibly helpful if the cohorts at school could align with "pods" being formed for remote learning. This would also be very helpful for those of us who need to rely on carpooling. I understand that there are challenges with this approach but it would be a great way to support continuity of the cohorts.	Gateway Middle School's existing cohort model will lend itself easily to small groups if/when hybrid learning happens. Siblings at Gateway Middle and Gateway High will have priority for scheduling students to be on campus on the same days. We are planning to keep students in small groups of 12-13 while on campus (drawing upon our current cohort model) and limiting locations and transitions for students		
		Can we request for cohorts of kids to be together for the 2-days a week in school? Reason being that we can try to keep these cohorts outsider of school and we can carpool (to avoid Muni). Thanks!			
		look at cohorts based on social groups that exist beyond school. Friends			
		Any thought about assigning a "buddy" system? Pair two students with different schedules to keep them connected			
		Maybe I mised it, but what about twins, are they going to be in the same group?			
		how many in a cohort?			
		how will you choose cohort groups?			
		Opting Out of Phase 2		Can we opt to have 100% online learning during phase 2?	We are considering how we would continue to offer distance learning only once we return to some in-person learning in a hybrid model. We will be asking some questions about this on our survey for families this coming week and we will follow up again with families when we get closer to a possible start of in-person learning.
		Will there be an option to continue exclusive online learning if student is immune compromised?			
		what about parents who do not want their kids to come to campus?			
What if you're in a family with someone who is health vulnerable and you don't want to attend a hybrid model ? Not willing to risk our family until a vaccine , what are our options?					

	<p>I don't see returning to an enclosed space as safe until there is a vaccine, especially with flu season coming up. My gut tells me we are going to have a redo of last spring if we try to return. I would like to hear more about the distance learning plans for the entire school year.</p>	
<p>Health and Safety</p>	<p>Are gaiter masks okay? https://www.amazon.com/neck-gaiter/s?k=neck+gaiter</p>	<p>Yes, this mask currently qualifies as a "face covering."</p>
	<p>What is the plan if someone in a cohort tests positive?</p>	<p>Gateway will follow the current state protocols that are to be followed if a staff or student tests positive for COVID-19.</p>
	<p>Can you talk about what happens if a teacher or student tests positive for COVID?</p>	<p>Gateway will follow the current state protocols that are to be followed if a staff or student tests positive for COVID-19.</p>
	<p>Is there a protocol surrounding students who refuse to wear a mask/wear it incorrectly/cough on another student? How would that be addressed?</p>	<p>Yes, there are currently strict state and local guidelines that students have to wear a face covering on campus. Students with specific health issues that prevent wearing masks will be considered separately.</p>
	<p>Is the SFUSD system supportive to the Gateway Schools leadership team with regards to helping you evaluate the environment of the building (for example, helping you evaluate the ventilation system), sourcing/forming testing procedures, etc.? Just want to echo what other parents have asked about how we can advocate for Gateway as parents/tax payers in SF. :)</p>	<p>Yes, we collaborate with SFUSD on facilities, Special Education, and we work with SF Dept. of Public Health and SFUSD in regards to health and safety plans and procedures. We are in the process of planning for what we need to do to ensure safe in-person learning when the time comes.</p>
	<p>Not sure if this was answered. For in person learning, will masks be provided or do we have to come with our own?</p>	<p>Masks will be provided to students who arrive at school without a face covering.</p>
	<p>will students be tested before returning to school?</p>	<p>Under current public health guidance, all people entering the campus will be screened every day; however, all students would not be tested.</p>
<p>On-Campus Logistics</p>	<p>What is happening with students locker from last year? Will students get new lockers?</p>	<p>We likely will not use lockers this year, based on public health guidance.</p>
	<p>In phase 2, will the cafeteria continue to be shared with Creative Arts? If so, how will that work, i.e., wrt spacing issues?</p>	<p>The cafeteria will not be used during the Hybrid Learning Model. The current California Department of Education guidelines require lunch to be served in classrooms with their small group of peers.</p>
	<p>Will lunch be served in the classroom or still at cafeteria with proper social distancing?</p>	<p>The cafeteria will not be used during the Hybrid Learning Model. The current California Department of Education guidelines require lunch to be served in classrooms with their small group of peers.</p>
	<p>Boys and girls club is doing summer day camp. Will they be doing on-site afterschool?</p>	<p>We are still working out plans with Boys & Girls Clubs SF for our partnership. Under current health orders, they cannot provide on-site, in-person support at GMS and it's still unclear what after school programs will look like throughout SF. However, we hope that they will be able to provide in-person support once it becomes safe to do so.</p>
	<p>(Academic) testing this year?</p>	<p>We will be doing internal assessments to inform teaching this year. However, it is not yet clear how state testing will work.</p>
	<p>Is outside learning going to be an option at any point?</p>	
	<p>Is there a possibility of outdoor classes? Like spending half a day off campus a week so that our students can be in the sun and outside?</p>	<p>We are strategizing how to make the most of our outdoor space when students return to campus, weather and student health needs permitting.</p>
	<p>Any thoughts about outdoor classroom time for some of the hybrid model?</p>	<p>We are strategizing how to make the most of our outdoor space when students return to campus, weather and student health needs permitting.</p>
	<p>Will there be aftercare available for when students are onsite in phase 2?</p>	<p>It is still unclear what after school programs will look like throughout SF; however, we are talking with our partners, YMCA and Boys & Girls Clubs SF, to see what is possible.</p>
	<p>Just clarifying... in a hybrid model, if my kid goes to school on Mon and Tues... does she have to bring her laptop with her to school? or can she leave it at home?</p>	<p>This will be their Gateway computer. They will bring it to school with them.</p>

		if a child falls sick in person and is unable to make up for the work (because they are sick for too long), what happens to their grades? From 7th grade, doesn't their score impact Highschool applications for places like Lowell?	As when students have an extended absence for any reason, teachers will work with the student and family individually to develop a plan for catching the student up.
		is there any thought about teachers switching classrooms during the in person part of school as opposed to kids moving around the building?	We are looking at all of the options, including these, to accommodate health and safety best practices.
		Regarding hybrid phase scheduling: Will teachers be teaching online and in-person learning at the same time? I thought I heard one of the panelists indicate something to this effect.	Teachers would need to do both; however, it's likely that they would spend part of their day facilitating on-line learning and part of their day facilitating in-person learning.
		will gateway coordinate with SFUSD with regards to school bus schedule pick ups and drop off when hybrid learning is in place?	Yes, we will continue to coordinate with SFUSD regarding students who qualify for transportation services.
		what about checking books out of the library/resource center?	Based on current health directives, shared materials and communal spaces will not be offered during distance learning. Chromebooks will be used for access to educational materials as much as possible.
Other	Other	Hi! when will students get their 2019- 2020 yearbooks? Hi My question is actually for last year 8th graders. Do you know when we can pick up the yearbook?	We hope to make yearbooks available when students pick-up their new laptops. If not then, we will organize a pick up this fall.
		Is this webinar for middle school students only? My son is in highschool- I haven't heard any questions pertaining to highschool students.	The high school session is tomorrow night, but much of the info is the same for both!
	will the curriculum this year address more on racial inequities now and in history and have conversations about the ongoing protests?	Great question! We strive to provide opportunities for students to engage with important current events, especially as they relate to issues of social justice. The 8th grade curriculum has a particular focus on racial justice, and other grades work to incorporate this content as well. We know that this is particularly salient right now, and are looking for ways to build knowledge of and engage students in discussions around racial justice.	
	our kid has some books from her 6th grade class that she brought home... when should we return the books?	You can return books when you come to pick up a computer and any other supplies.	
Parent Support, Advocacy and Volunteering	Volunteering	Let us know if you need volunteers for the great chromebook handout! How can parents help support the teachers and admin? Do you need volunteers?	Gateway will post volunteer opportunities on ParentSquare once the school year begins. Thank you for your incredible support!
	Parent Tech Support	Thanks so much for hosting this town hall. Will you be providing increased guidance to parents about how best to involve ourselves/oversee how our kids are learning without encroaching upon the autonomy they need to develop for their own learning? Will there be an in service for parents on the learning platforms and will there be drop in virtual hours for students? This is sort of a tech question: will parents be oriented to the learning platforms?	Students will be oriented to all new technology and programs in the beginning of the year. We are happy to plan parent trainings if there is sufficient need/demand.
	Parent Support	Thanks so much for hosting this town hall. Will you be providing increased guidance to parents about how best to involve ourselves/oversee how our kids are learning without encroaching upon the autonomy they need to develop for their own learning?	Stay tuned for family info nights on technology and supporting learning at home.

	Parent Support	And does distance learning make a presumption that an adult is cooperatively helping out? What grades are considered autonomous?	We aim for learning to be autonomous; however we know that many students will need help getting to this point. Teachers will be working hard to scaffold Distance Learning and meet the needs of all learners, and we know that this process will take collaboration between school and home. Please reach out to your students' teacher if you have ideas, feedback, and to partner in this process.
	New Families	Regarding new students to our students grade, please give us the opportunity to be a buddy/supportive family for the new families. Thank you!	Thanks! We're thinking about ways on increasing communication and support across families, including through ParentSquare. More to come on this!
	Advocacy and Fundraising	What can families do to support a safe and supportive school? Is additional fundraising needed? Advocacy? How can families best support the safe and supportive return to school (distance and remote). Is there some advocacy required or additional fundraising needed? We hear a lot about families who are experiencing economic hardship during the pandemic. Is there a way we as a community at GMS can come together to support them?	Gateway, like all public schools in SF, is in need of additional funding and resources to implement the recommendations for a safe and supportive return to school. Within our Gateway community, there will be opportunities to support fundraising as early as August. Volunteer opportunities will be posted to ParentSquare as our teachers and staff identify needs. In addition, once students are scheduled into cohorts, there may be opportunities to network and support each other in cohorts. In terms of advocacy, schools are continuing to push for support for additional funding and resources at the city, state and federal level. Once we return to school, we hope to organize a Gateway community of support for those who are in need within our Gateway community, and we would love to have parents lead this effort. Gateway's staff will share more details once family needs are assessed.
Distance Learning and Hybrid Model	Schedule	Will school start date (August 17) change in any way? It is mentioned that this date is a draft?	School will start on a distance learning model on August 17.
		When would the schedule and class that my child belongs to be provided as part of the phase 1 August 17 distance learning?	Schedules will be developed after the parent survey is completed and distributed as soon as possible. The survey was sent to families on July 27 with a deadline to complete by July 31.
		what time will the day start?	
		Sorry if I missed it, but will the school day start at 8:30 regardless of the distance or hybrid model?	Right now we are focusing on starting strong with Distance Learning; we will return to the logistics of hybrid learning once we have more guidance around moving to this phase.
		how will hybrid work when you are at home... if lessons are going on throughout school hours, will students at home have to be on zoom for the whole school hour too?	
		What are the changes allowing the students to come in more than 2 days if my child wants to go more days?	
Special Education	Resource Specialists	How will RSPs [resource specialists] get to know their students they haven't met before?	All of our special education services are provided through SFUSD (our Learning specialists, paraprofessionals, and related services are all SFUSD special education employees) therefore, we are awaiting guidance from SFUSD regarding the specifics of special education services. That said, we know we will continue to prioritize things like co-planning between general education teachers and learning specialists, collaborating closely with families, and providing direct support to students via Zoom. IEP case managers will reach out to families of students with IEPs once school begins to talk about specific plans for each student. Similarly, our 504 coordinator will reach out to families of students with 504s once the school year begins. If you have general questions prior to the start of school related to 504s and/or IEPs feel free to reach out to Cassandra Dougherty at cdougherty@gatewaymiddle.org.
	IEP	Will any students (IEPs, children of essential workers) be prioritized for in-person learning?	
		Will students with IEPs get priority on choosing a schedule that fits their needs?	
	504 Plans	Apologize if this has already been answered (just joined the call). Will you prioritize children according to need: IEP students, those whose living conditions are not conducive to learning for example?	
	504 Plans	How are you planning to accommodate students who have special learning needs i.e. 504 plan during phase 1 and phase 2? Are there opportunities for in person learning for students with 504s or other specific learning needs?	