

SUMTER COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT
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Press Release

From: Colleen Strickland, Curriculum Supervisor

Date: August 10, 2020

Subject: SUMTER SCHOOL DISTRICT WELCOMES RETURN OF STUDENTS

Welcome Back with Parent Choice

The Sumter County School District's priority is to provide a healthy and safe learning environment for all staff members and students. The start date for the 2020-21 school year is August 24, 2020. The district is offering three learning options for the upcoming school year; a **traditional reopening** as directed by the Governor, **TEAMSumter**, with a structured distance learning format, and **Sumter Virtual School**, which is more flexible, computer-driven, and requires more student self-discipline. These choices are available for parent/guardian selection for the new school year during this pandemic.

The **traditional** model represents a return to the school campus and the classroom where students will interact directly with their teacher(s) and classmates. Our goal is to create an environment that provides an opportunity for students to return to the traditional school experience, while providing effective safeguards to protect the health and safety of students and staff. The school day will follow the standard bell times and standard schedule that includes all the core classes and other subject areas.

The **TEAMSumter eLearning** model is designed for families who would like to maintain their connection to their home school, but do not yet feel comfortable sending their student(s) back to regular school the first semester. After the first semester, students will resume school in the traditional school setting based on state guidelines. Students will sign in and attend school remotely, following a standard school schedule and bell times. In the event schools are closed due to COVID-19, all instruction will transition to this TEAMSumter model. Upon initial sign-up, this model requires a nine-week commitment. While many courses will be available through **TEAMSumter**, some courses will only be offered through the Traditional option or through Sumter Virtual (i.e. AP and AICE/Cambridge).

With **TEAMSumter**, parents can rely on teachers to directly facilitate and guide student learning. This choice provides families the flexibility to choose an instructional model to meet their needs and reflects our district's commitment to providing a high-quality instructional experience, no matter the setting. Again, this choice requires a nine-week commitment.

The **Sumter Virtual School** model is ideal for students who wish to have more control over their learning path and pace, and for whom a flexible daily schedule is important. In this learning model, students often work on assignments during non-traditional hours, and maintain contact with teachers and classmates using web-based class sessions, email, text messages, and phone calls. Sumter

Virtual School requires a more independent student who is proactive and willing to learn on their own. Sumter Virtual School offers courses for students in kindergarten through twelfth grade, supported by a team of highly qualified teachers who offer flexible office hours. Students will need a personally owned device to use with internet at home. Enrollment requires an adult who can partner with **Sumter Virtual School** teachers by serving as the learning guide for the student, especially at the elementary school level.

Students are legally required to attend school in some format. Homeschool is always an available option for parents, but students must register. Call (352) 793-2315 ext. 50312 for registration information.

Public Health Actions on Every Campus

As schools open, the following public health actions will be in place:

- practice safe social distancing and use of face coverings to the greatest extent possible
- post signage and provide lessons on “scheduled” frequent hand washing and hygiene practices
- ensure hand sanitizer is available throughout the campus
- increase cleaning protocols throughout each campus
- limit group gatherings
- encourage face coverings on campus
- ensure any staff or students who exhibit symptoms are not at school or in the workplace

At the elementary school level, schools are creating a cohort isolation model, where students will spend time on campus with the group of students in their class, including in the classroom, the cafeteria, media center, and the playground. Interaction with students from other classes will be limited to the greatest extent possible. If a student displays symptoms of illness, it will likely impact the cohort classmates, and not the entire school, in terms of quarantine or other interventions.

At the secondary level, each school will have a customized plan to discourage large gatherings of students in hallways and common areas, using clear communication and signage to reinforce the message. The number of students allowed in the cafeteria, media center and gymnasiums will be significantly reduced. Extracurricular activities will resume, and will adhere to recommendations from CDC and state.

Technology

A digital classroom is one of many important tools to help our students be successful in today’s rapidly changing global society. Schools in Sumter County have secured the electronic infrastructure needed for breakthroughs in digital learning. Schools will kick off the year with a variety of technology advances such as expanding *Sumter One to One*. “Sumter wants to stay on the cutting edge of technology, career preparation and innovation to help our students meet the academic needs of our students and the future workforce that will employ them,” says Superintendent Shirley.

Sumter One-to-One is expanding to provide student laptops or tablets in the classroom for every student in Kindergarten through fifth grade. All students at South Sumter Middle, South Sumter High and Wildwood Middle High will receive an individual laptop to travel with the student throughout the day and home. Technology Days will be held at each middle and high school prior to the start of

school for families to receive the student laptops and load relevant applications and software. Technology Days will be held during flexible hours to accommodate working students and parents. Parents must sign an acceptable use policy. Elementary students will be assigned tablets/laptops the first few days of school by their classroom teacher. An optional district sponsored insurance policy will be available to reduce parents' obligations for repair costs associated with damage to student issued laptops. Details about the insurance plan can be found on the district website. Integrating technology into the classrooms is critical to ensure all Sumter students are prepared with 21st Century Skills. Through *Sumter One-to-One* students have access to academic software, on demand assessments, tutoring, multi-media communication, and coding programs. Every student has a Microsoft 365 account with full access to Microsoft Outlook, Word, Sway, PowerPoint, Excel and much more.

Student Meals at No Charge

Student meals are available daily at all schools and will be offered at no charge to all students as all Sumter schools are now designated as Title I. The district will continue to request parents to complete the Free and Reduced meal forms as other critical funding is based on this data. Forms will be sent home with students at the beginning of school and should be returned promptly. Offering meals at no charge to all students will allow more food options, more a la cart choices and will generate revenue to make changes to cafeterias such as upgrading equipment.

Student Transportation

The school district provides bus transportation for children living beyond walking distance of the schools. Beginning this year all students must wear a face covering and scan their student ID card as they enter and exit the bus. Student ID cards may be picked up by students at school orientation. Bus information such as stop location, bus number, and arrival and departure times may be obtained by attending orientation, checking the e-link on the Transportation tab of the district website, or parents may call the Transportation Department at 793-5705. It is recommended that all children ride the bus on the morning of the first day of school to assist the driver in locating bus stops. Parents may meet the bus at school or follow it along the route. Superintendent Shirley has a recommendation for parents, "On the first day of school, young children in pre-kindergarten, kindergarten and first grade should wear identification tags with first and last name, telephone number(s), home address and the correct bus number."

The following public health actions will be in place on buses to ensure safety:

- face coverings are required on the bus
- clean high touch areas between runs
- ensure hand sanitizer is available on each bus and use upon entry and exit from bus
- disinfect each bus thoroughly at the end of each day
- using social gathering guideline numbers, students will be routed in such a way as to adhere to those numbers (currently 50)

Technology Days

<i>School</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Time</i>
South Sumter Middle	Tuesday, July 28	1:00 pm -6:00 pm (6 th grade)
	Wednesday, July 29	8:00 am- noon (7 th grade)
		1:00 pm – 6:00 pm (8 th grade)
	Monday, August 3	1:00 pm – 5:00 pm (6 th , 7 th , 8 th grade)
South Sumter High School	Thursday, July 30	8:00 am – noon (12 th grade)
	Wednesday, August 5	8:00 am –noon (11 th grade)
	Thursday, August 5	1:00 pm – 6:00 pm (10 th grade)
	Thursday, August 6	8:00 am – noon (9 th grade)
Wildwood Middle High	Monday, July 27	1:00 pm-6:00 pm (6 th , 7 th , 8 th grade)
	Tuesday, July 28	8:00 am – noon (11 th and 12 th grade)
	Thursday, July 30	1:00 pm – 6:00 pm ((9 th and 10 th grade)
	Tuesday, August 4	1:00 pm – 5:00 pm (6 th , 7 th , 8 th grade)
Sumter PREP Academy	Monday, August 17	10:00 am – 3:00 pm (all grades)

Parents must attend to sign Acceptable Use Policy.

Orientation Schedule

<i>School</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Students</i>
Bushnell Elementary	Thursday, August 20	8:00 am	Pre-K last name A-Z
		8:00 am – 9:30 am	K-2 nd grade last name A-M
		9:30 am– 11:00 am	3 rd - 5 th grade last name A-M
		12:00 pm – 1:30 pm	K-2 nd grade last name N-Z
		1:30 pm – 3:00 pm	3 rd -5 th grade last name N-Z
Webster Elementary	Friday, August 21	8:00 am – 9:00 am	PreK-5 Grade last name A-D
		9:30 am -10:30 am	PreK-5 th grade last name E-K
		12:00 pm – 1:00 pm	PreK-5 th grade last name L-P

		1:30 pm – 2:30 pm	PreK-5 th grade last name R-Z
Lake Panasoffkee Elementary	Thursday, August 20	8:00 am – 9:30 am	PreK-2 nd grade last name A – M
		9:30 am – 11:00 am	3 rd -5 th grade last name A – M
		12:00 pm – 1:30 pm	PreK -2 nd grade last name N – Z
		1:30 pm – 3:00 pm	3 rd -5 th grade last name N – Z
Wildwood Elementary	Tuesday, August 18	8:30 am – 10:00 am	PreK-5 th grade last name A-F
		10:00 am -11:30 am	PreK-5 th grade last name G-M
		1:00 pm – 2:30 pm	PreK-5 th grade last name N-Z
South Sumter Middle	Tuesday, August 18	9:00 am – 11:00 am	6 th Grade
	Thursday, August 20	9:00 am – 11:00	7 th & 8 th grade
South Sumter High	Friday, August 21	8:30 am – 10:30 am	9 th grade
Wildwood Middle High	Tuesday, August 18	9:00 am – 10:00 am	6 th grade Orientation
		11:00 am - noon	7 th grade
		1:00 pm – 2:00 pm	8 th grade
	Thursday, August 20	10:00 am – 11:00 am	9 th -10 th grade
		1:00 pm-2:00 pm	11 th -12 th grade
Sumter PREP Academy	Monday, August 17	10:00 am – 10: 45 am	3 rd -6 th grade
		1:00 pm – 1:45pm	7 th – 8 th grade
		2:00 pm – 3:00 pm	9 th – 12 th grade

TEAMSumter Orientations

Schools will call to schedule one-hour appointments with families.

Webster Elementary	Thursday, August 20	by appointment
Wildwood Elementary	Thursday, August 20	by appointment
Bushnell Elementary	Friday, August 21	by appointment
Lake Panasoffkee Elementary	Friday, August 21	by appointment
South Sumter Middle	Friday, August 21	9:00 am – 11:00 am

Bell Schedules

School	First Bell	Tardy Bell	Dismissal Bell	Phone
Bushnell Elementary	7:55 am	8:00 am	2:30 pm	352-793-3501
Webster Elementary	7:55 am	8:00 am	2:30 pm	352-793-2828
Lake Panasoffkee Elementary	7:55 am	8:00 am	2:30 pm	352-793-1093

Wildwood Elementary	7:50 am	7:55 am	2:25 pm	352-748-3353
South Sumter Middle School	8:45 am	8:51 am	3:44 pm	352-793-2232
South Sumter High School	8:55 am	9:00 am	3:35 pm	352-793-3131
Sumter PREP Academy	7:55 am	7:57 am	2:00 pm	352-568-1113
Wildwood Middle High	8:56 am	9:00 am	3:34 pm	352-748-1314

Sumter schools are looking forward to another great year. For more information about school bell times, dress code policies, and school supply lists, please visit the district website at: www.sumter.k12.fl.us or call the school(s) directly.