

# ***Old Rochester Regional School District MA School Superintendency Union #55***

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## **Back to School 2020-2021 Plan**

***Mission: To inspire all students to think, to learn and to care.***

***#WEareOR***

***This plan does not attempt to answer every question and must be viewed as an overarching framework. Much work is ahead and our dedicated staff will provide the details that are pertinent to you and your student as we get closer to the start of the school year.***

***This plan is subject to change with additional state guidance and as we receive feedback from staff, families, and the school committees.***

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## **SUPERINTENDENT'S LETTER**

August 3, 2020

Dear School Community,

On March 13, 2020 our public school experience was changed for the foreseeable future. Governor Baker's executive order to prohibit in-person learning for the short term and ultimately the rest of the 2019-2020 school year has truly changed our perspectives and thinking on public education moving forward. As the COVID-19 global pandemic continues to impact our way of life and we consider the implications on how best to move forward - we as a Tri-Town Community must decide what is best for our children and our community members. The overall safety of our students, families, and staff members remains our top priority. Each decision we make must put safety at the forefront.

How the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted our local students and families is complex. Each student and family is facing specific challenges. We acknowledge that no learning model can replicate in-person learning. The best educational environment for all students is in-person - with their teachers and support staff. Our schools not only teach academic content - but also provide students safe, joyful, and engaging learning environments. All of our schools and classrooms strive to offer engaging academics and positive communities. It is critical that we have our students learn and develop social skills and social/emotional competencies with their peers. Knowing this - we are working tirelessly to create a Back to School 2020-2021 Plan for our students and families. This plan will outline three learning models that we must be able to utilize depending on the need: in-person learning (all students return to school), hybrid learning (a mix of in-person and out of school learning), and remote learning (all students learn remotely).

This decision is an incredibly important and difficult decision to make. We have all become comfortable hearing and using the term unprecedented - well the COVID-19 situation is unprecedented. As a school community, we have not navigated such a situation before. Nevertheless, we are fortunate to have such dedicated staff members, community members, and stakeholders committed to designing a reopening schools plan that allows our students the most optimal educational experience - based on the known circumstances and the individual needs of a student and their family.

We continue to follow and process all provided national, state, and local guidance. Specifically, we have rooted our efforts in examining and utilizing the Department of Elementary and Secondary guidance. The Superintendent's Office has shared such guidance with our stakeholders to ensure that our school community understands the framework that we are working within. Our local health officials are also critical players that help guide decision-making for our schools. Planning teams that serve the elementary and secondary levels have been

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regularly meeting to brainstorm, ask questions, and share concerns. Each building principal has led their own planning team to discuss specific needs of their school buildings. Additionally, key players have met regularly to discuss technology, facilities, and operations as we plan for the upcoming school year. I have met routinely and communicated daily with the school principals to discuss all school matters and reopening plans.

As a result, all of our collective efforts have resulted in an informed Back to School 2020-2021 Plan. Is it perfect? No. There is not a perfect plan. What we have done is design a plan that accounts for parent, guardian, student, staff member, and stakeholder voice. Since March 13, 2020 - we have solicited feedback from our stakeholders through surveys, direct feedback, and planning teams. Again, it is clear that there is not a single plan that meets all students and families needs. Safety and the overall well-being of our students has been our main goal. Our plan is not set in stone - it needs to be flexible and we need to understand that our learning model may change throughout the school year.

Our educators continue to prove why the Old Rochester Regional School District and Massachusetts School Superintendency Union #55 is a respected educational community and continuously meets and exceeds expectations. Collectively - our educators are trained to do everything they can for their students and will not ease off of that obligation and calling. We must continue to invest in their work and provide them the necessary time to meet the demands of this planning. This can only be accomplished with your help and support. As we establish a plan for reopening and reentry that has high expectations for meeting all students where they are academically through a myriad of health, safety, and well-being expectations - we must provide our educators with planning and collaborating time. In return, our educators will set forth the best and dynamic plans for learning and teaching, to continuously enhance ideal learning strategies through reopening and ensure meaningful engagement of their students in any of the models.

The Tri-Town Community is one of great pride, support, and expectations of the experiences and education provided to our students. Every family dynamic and need cannot be met during this unprecedented time - it troubles us to admit this truth. However, we will do everything that we possibly can. Faced with endless recommendations, conflicting guidance, ideas, and "what ifs" this plan at its roots addresses health, safety, and well-being first. I believe our efforts have been thoughtful, progressive, and provide a starting place for our school community to move forward with education in the Tri-Town schools. This form of planning appears to be our foreseeable norm, so we ask our stakeholders to be supportive and your patience with not having every detail of what school will look like.

There is a financial uncertainty that is also at play with our planning. At this time, the state financial picture lacks clarity and definitive numbers for us to understand an overall fiscal year 2021 budget, but it does not prevent us from identifying, planning, and seeking the resources we need. This comprehensive plan requires personal protection equipment, technology, and other resources to execute it. As expected by our school community, we are seeking every available financial resource to accomplish our reopening plan needs.

It is certain that our plan and recommendations for reopening will continue to need refinement. This has been the most difficult work we have ever experienced in our careers. As an educational community - we continue to work in good faith and attempt to meet the

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complexities we are faced with by utilizing a student-centered approach. In conclusion, we are required by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to build a comprehensive plan to submit to you and the School Committees for approval. Guidance and recommendations continue to be fluid and we know that changes to our plan are inevitable. Despite the challenges in front of us and the uncertainties - our students' futures are bright. They have a community behind them that refuses to settle for anything less than what they deserve. More answers are on the horizon and you will receive the answers to the questions that you have. As your Superintendent of Schools - please know how grateful I am to serve each and every student. I take great pride in being able to do my very best for our school community.

Please know I will do everything in my power to serve our school community at the highest possible level.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. Nelson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "M" and a stylized "N".

Michael S. Nelson  
Superintendent of Schools

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## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

The members listed below serve on planning teams and we are grateful for their service and ongoing contributions. It is important to note that by listing individuals names below - that does not constitute that they are in full agreement with ALL aspects of this plan.

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Susan Wheeler - Technologist  
Susan White - Technologist

***Last but not least, a big thank you to the many students, staff, parents, and caregivers for your partnership and support these past months - I know it hasn't been easy. Thank you for your patience, for responding to our surveys, for your emails and communications. We learned from your experiences during the emergency school closure, and your input has helped to inform this plan. We have accomplished a lot in a short period, and we have you—our incredible Tri-Town Community - to thank for it!***

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Old Rochester Regional School District & Massachusetts School Superintendency Union #55 has completed their comprehensive ***Back to School 2020-2021 Plan***. It is critical to acknowledge that this plan is subject to change with additional State guidance and as we receive feedback from staff, families, and our school committees. Below please find the executive summary which highlights the key components that our school community members should familiarize themselves with:

1. The Joint School Committee approves any modifications to the school calendar. The Superintendent's recommendation to the Joint School Committee is a school start date that begins on Wednesday, September 16, 2020.
2. Whenever possible, all students and staff will practice six (6) feet of social distancing and wear face-masks in grades K-12. The State issued initial health guidance on June 25, 2020, requiring students and staff to maintain social distances of three to six feet, to wear face-masks (grades 2-12), and to organize students at the secondary level by cohorts to minimize interaction.
3. Based on our feasibility study of our school buildings and the current transportation guidance provided by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education - we do not believe that a full in-person return to school is possible based on all available data points.
4. We plan on offering additional in-person support to our most vulnerable student populations based on individual need and family decision-making.
5. Our faculty and staff have learned a great deal since the emergency school closure. For this reason, we expect the teaching and learning this experience in the fall will look differently than what you experienced during the emergency school closure that began in March, 2020.
6. We plan to start the 2020-2021 school year this fall with two priority teaching and learning models:
  - Remote Learning: This option is available to any student in grades K-12. Staff who are approved for this model will engage in 100% remote (synchronous and asynchronous) teaching and learning experiences (or work experiences for non-instructional staff). The RL is designed to respond to the needs of those students, families, and staff who are immunocompromised, as well as others who choose a remote learning environment.
  - Hybrid Learning Model: This option provides K-12 students and staff with a combination of in-person and out-of-school learning experiences (or hybrid work experiences for non-instructional staff). Our student population at each school will be divided into two cohorts.

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7. Parents and guardians also have the ability to request approval from the Superintendent of Schools to homeschool their child or children. Please contact the Superintendent's Office for additional information at 508-758-2772 x1956.
  8. Everyone should be fully prepared for a return to remote learning if necessary, and understand that it could be a decision that must be made at a moment's notice. We must be ready for the possibility that all of our classes will be fully remote at some point.
  9. We reserve the right to make changes to any and all aspects of the ***Back to School 2020-2021 Plan***, as we consider community feedback, additional guidance from the State, and continue to monitor COVID-19 trends.

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## **Overview:**

### **A Disclaimer**

Please understand that the school-system needs to reserve the right to change the “Old Rochester Regional School District & Massachusetts School Superintendency Union #55 Back to School 2020-2021 Plan at any time. The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (MA DESE) continues to issue additional return-to-school guidance. Our community has unique needs. We will need to continue to align the “reopening plan” with the most current guidance and recommendations.

### **The Start of the school year**

Know that our Joint School School Committee approves any changes to the school calendar. The administration is recommending that the school start date for our schools this fall is Wednesday, September 16, 2020.

A September 16, 2020 start date would enable us to do the following: provide more educator planning and training time for the upcoming school year; address special education evaluations that need to be completed; provide compensatory services for students with disabilities with the greatest need; provide intensive support to our most vulnerable students, reacclimating them to in-person school prior to the official start date; learn more about COVID-19 as new studies emerge; and (depending on the trajectory and timing of the virus in the Northeast), we may also avoid the back-to-school stops and starts that others in the nation have experienced with a resurgence of the virus.

A later school start date for students also would help us avoid the primary elections on September 1, 2020 that may require public access to school facilities.

By reducing the school day requirement from 180 to 170 days to allow Massachusetts educators to participate in additional back-to-school planning and safety preparations. Specifically, this additional planning and training time would focus on COVID-19 precautions, student benchmarking, remote learning technical assistance, remote learning best practice professional development, preparing classrooms, and outreach to students and families.

### **Initial State Guidance on the Reopening of School**

We continue to await final guidance on back-to-school plans, and it is our understanding that the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (MA DESE) now plans to issue final guidance in August. On Thursday, June 25, 2020, Governor Baker shared State guidelines for Massachusetts’ school re-opening in the fall. A link to the Governor’s press conference is [here](#); a link to the MA DESE initial reopening of school guidance is [here](#). During the Governor’s press conference, the spokesperson for the Massachusetts Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics stated that they “share [the MA DESE] goal of bringing most

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children in the Commonwealth back to in-person learning this fall, while minimizing risk to them, the school staff, and their families.”

The MA DESE guidance sets forth the several guidelines for public schools, including but not limited to the following:

- All students in grades 2 through 12 will wear face-masks in school;
- All students and staff will stay three to six feet apart;
- We should organize students at the junior and high school levels by cohorts to minimize interaction.

As mentioned elsewhere in this plan, our schools are requiring students and staff in grades K-12 to wear face-masks; maintain social distancing, and organize elementary, middle, and high school into cohorts to minimize interaction and help with contact tracing, should that become necessary.

## **Your Back-to-School Options**

The health, safety, and well-being of our students and staff is our top priority. We are working with the town and school health officials to plan the safest return-to-school in the fall. The public health COVID-19 indicators show that Massachusetts maintains a downward/level trend. We are paying close attention to case numbers and rates in Plymouth and Bristol counties. It is critical that we continue to closely monitor this data, and we should be prepared to move rapidly to full-time remote learning should numbers dictate such action.

Until such time as we are able to return safely to full-time in-person school, we are providing two options for teaching and learning for the fall of the 2020-2021 school year: (a) Remote Learning Model; or (b) Hybrid Learning Model. After weighing the pros and cons of many models of learning—including a full return to school—it was determined that these two back-to-school options are the safest for us at this time. Students on IEPs and 504s will receive their required services with either option. These services will take place either remotely or in-person, depending on individual circumstances.

The data we gathered are essential in developing plans for a September return to school. We know how difficult it has been for our school community to make a choice now for a preferred model of teaching and learning, given so many uncertainties. The Commissioner of Education indicated in recently released [FAQs](#) that parents/caregivers can choose to keep their children at home learning remotely. As a result, the following applies: (1) any student can participate in remote learning, (2) doctor's notes are no longer required, and (3) families will not be locked into one particular learning model for the entire school year.

If family circumstances change or a parent/caregiver has a change of heart, please fill out this [Student Fall Learning Change Request Form](#) to request a change in the learning model. If we are not back to full-time in-person schooling by January, we will establish a process to check in with families and staff about their teaching and learning assignments. Additionally, staff

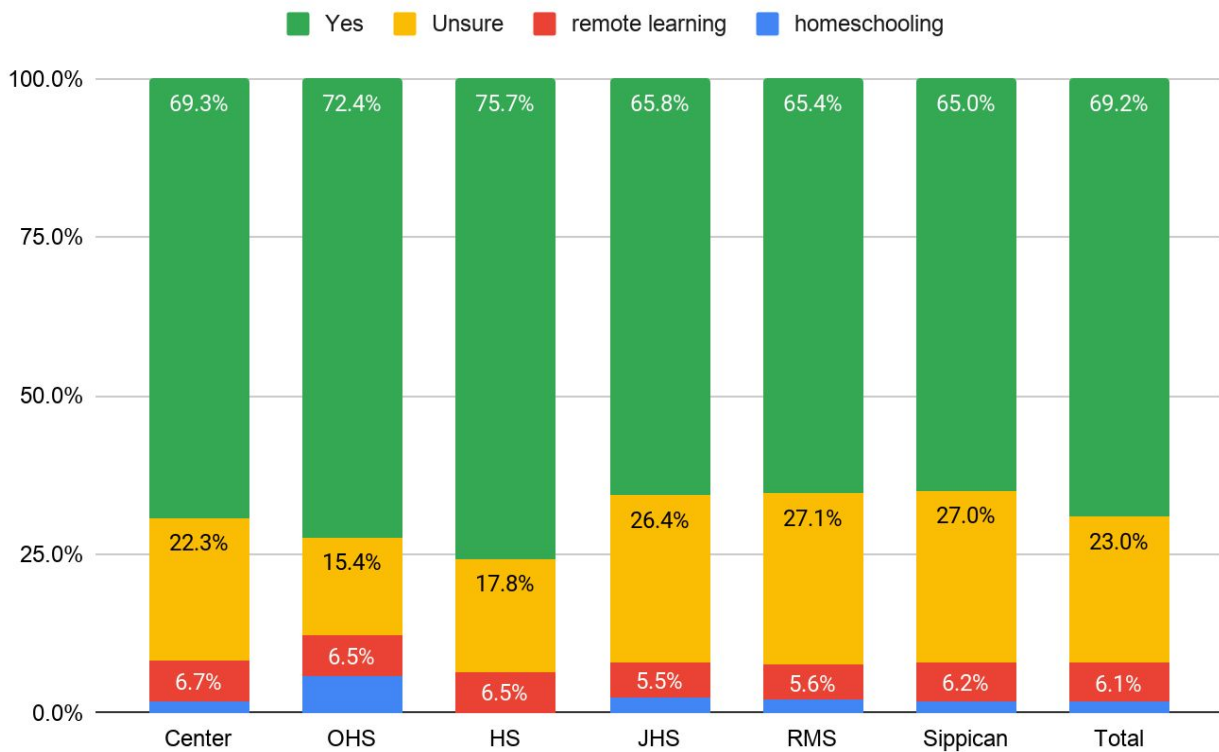
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members can contact Human Resources (508-758-2772 x1939) at any time if they wish to discuss their teaching or work assignment.

We have collected an extensive amount of data through surveys and planning meetings. We now have a sense of student and staff preferences. Our school community plans thoughtfully and often; therefore, it is worth noting that when we collect data of this kind, we use it to *inform our plans*—it does not take the place of the subjective decisions that must be made in any planning process. In regard to this plan, the options are designed to align with the majority of school community feedback, but that may not always be the case. For something as complex as a safe return to in-person schooling, it is necessary to use a combination of our professional judgment, our knowledge of community wants and needs, and the wisdom of experts, such as our local public health officials, to assist us in making difficult decisions.

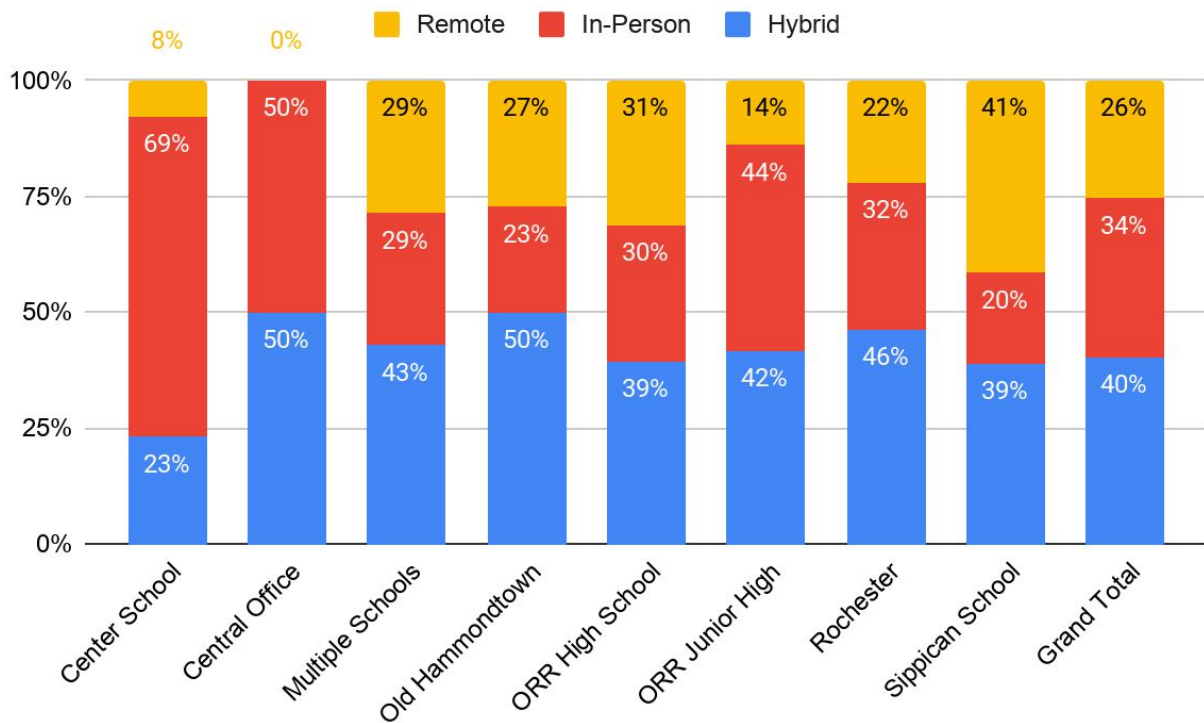
In July, 2020, approximately 69.2% of families who responded to our survey expressed a desire for a full in-person return to school or a hybrid learning model option (Table 1). We also asked staff about assignment preferences in July, 2020 (Table 2).

**Table 1. Fall 2020: Family Learning Preferences**



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**Table 2. Fall 2020: Staff Assignment Preference**



### **Why Return to School in the Fall with the Hybrid Model?**

The nationwide debate about a full return to in-person schooling this fall has been divisive and unhealthy, especially for the young people who look to us for guidance and reassurance. The President of the United States and some State officials have sent strong messages that a full return to school is expected in the fall. Some members of the Tri-Town Community demand a full return to school, while others feel strongly that full remote learning is the answer. There are no easy answers. It is our sincere hope that soon we will be able to safely return to the full in-person model of schooling that we once knew, but we do not believe that the time to do so is now. While there is no shortage of opinion on how we should operate our public school systems during the COVID-19 pandemic, there is a significant shortage of State and Federal support. .

We recognize the need for schools to operate in order for the economy to recover. We also feel the weight of the enormous responsibility that comes with making policy decisions and plans that potentially affect the lives of thousands of people. We do not take these decisions lightly, and as we outline in the [“Your Health, Well-Being, and Safety”](#) portion of this plan, there are ongoing health and safety concerns to consider before we are ready for a full return to school. New studies, endorsed by the American Academy of Pediatrics, are emerging and indicate children are less likely to contract COVID-19 than adults. While the findings sound promising,

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other public health officials suggest that these studies are conducted largely outside of the United States and in European countries where the conditions are significantly different.

Meanwhile, new large-scale studies are emerging indicating that older children spread COVID-19 as much as adults, click [here](#). The findings suggest that we will see clusters of infection in children of all ages as school communities reopen.<sup>1</sup> Our plan - with its aggressive safety measures and remote and hybrid models with fewer students and staff at any given time—takes that likelihood into account. Both adults and children inhabit schools and our youngest occupants may be safer than the adults, but the simple truth is that we cannot say with certainty how the virus affects children. While some healthcare professionals legitimize these speculative studies in support of a full return to school, others acknowledge that a great deal of uncertainty remains.

Another point that has been lost in the national debate is that even if those speculative studies are true and children really are free from risk, they aren't the only occupants of school buildings. We have adults in school buildings, too—approximately 500 staff members occupy our schools. While no one is risk-free, we have a duty to keep all members of our school community as safe as possible. For the past several months we have been isolated and in quarantine. We have seen what has happened on a national and global scale when school systems rush to a full return to in-person school. In their eagerness to return to school, they have been forced to backtrack on their plans, creating more delays and setbacks than they would have experienced if they had simply adopted a more measured approach. As we look at the health metrics nationwide and the number of COVID-19 cases and deaths continues to climb, it seems prudent to ease into in-person schooling and a full-return when it is safe to do so. The two following options outline an approach that helps us get students and staff back into school buildings safely.

## Option A—Remote Learning

Remote Learning (RL) is designed specifically to respond to the needs of those students, families, and staff who are immunocompromised. Results from our July survey indicate that **approximately 6.1% of families prefer full remote learning in the fall**, given what we know about COVID-19. These respondents shared concerns about the health of their child or family members in high-risk categories. Students and staff who are thriving in the remote learning environment and prefer a non-traditional school experience can also participate in the RL if they so choose.

Many have asked for more details about the RL, and the specifics are in development. It is our understanding that the State is exploring the possibility of an online learning platform for Massachusetts schools. If the State adopts an online learning tool, we will plan to utilize that as an option. In addition, we also know from school community input that there are students and

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<sup>1</sup> Older Children Spread the Coronavirus just as much as Adults Large Study Finds (2020, July 18). Apoorva Mandavilli, *New York Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/18/health/coronavirus-children-schools.html>



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staff who thrive in a less-structured remote learning setting and enjoy the flexibilities and innovations that non-traditional approaches to education can provide, such as theme- and project-based, interdisciplinary units that tap into students' interests, mastery-based grading, and solving real-world problems. We are in the process of exploring ways that we can offer both approaches to remote teaching and learning to our students and staff.

The Remote Learning (RL) model is an entirely remote, PK-12 virtual learning option available to students and families for the 2020-2021 school year. The Remote Learning model is designed to respond to the needs of those students, families, and staff who are immunocompromised. Students and families who are thriving in the remote learning environment and prefer a non-traditional school experience also may wish to consider this option.

A general overview of the RL follows:

- Elementary (PK-6) students begin their day with a synchronous learning experience that starts at 9:00 a.m. Students will be placed in fully remote classes, with a curriculum that aligns with state standards.
- Junior High School (grades 7-8) students will be placed on remote teams. They will begin their day with asynchronous learning experiences that start at 7:30 a.m. and synchronous learning experiences that start at 9:30 a.m.
- High School (grades 9-12) students will be assigned courses on the online platform GRADPOINT to be supervised and supported by ORRHS Staff. Students will be assigned a full schedule of grade-level courses to be completed online. They will begin their day with a synchronous meeting with a staff member at 8:00 a.m.
- Students in Remote Learning will have the option of demonstrating what they know and can do through traditional or non-traditional grading systems and attendance will be recorded.

## **Sample Learning Schedules**

While there are many details still to be determined, depending on students and families opting into Remote Learning, as well as staffing, we do know that students will receive a robust, engaging education that is aligned with the curriculum their peers will be experiencing in the Hybrid Learning model option. While instructional practices will look different, due to the entirely online nature of the RL model, students will be provided with a rigorous learning experience that recognizes the social nature of learning, as well as the unique challenges and opportunities of effective online instruction and learning. At the same time, the program will prioritize building strong relationships between teachers and students, and across student cohorts. The sample learning schedules below outline what a typical day might look like for a student participating in remote learning and are subject to change as more details become available and the planning process progresses.

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## **Elementary (K-3) Sample Remote Learning Schedule**

30 minute Morning Meeting	Each day starts with a Morning Meeting led by the classroom teacher. Students greet one another, share with one another, and hear about what to expect on that day. Sometimes the Morning Meeting may be extended so that the teacher can offer a Social/Emotional Learning lesson, or play a game to develop the class community.
1 Hour  Academic Content	Content is introduced with a synchronous/asynchronous mini-lesson (10-30 mins) and students have the opportunity to practice the skill and ask questions. Students continue to work to apply the skills asynchronously, and teachers provide additional instruction or feedback to students via individual check-ins, small group meetings, or using technology to offer feedback on student work. This is also a time where students may work with specialists for additional support. Content taught in the RL is aligned with state standards.
15 minute  Snack/Break/ Recess	
1 hour 30 minute  Academic Content	Content will usually be introduced by the classroom teacher, though additional educators may occasionally lead lessons. Other educators will regularly be supporting the students and the classroom teacher by conducting individual check-ins or running small groups with students, or offering feedback electronically.
40 minute Lunch and Recess	Optional virtual lunch groups may be offered to allow students an opportunity to eat with their friends!
40 minute Specials	Art, Music, PE, Library

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1 hour  
Academic  
Content

Content is introduced with a synchronous/asynchronous mini-lesson (10-30 mins) and students have the opportunity to practice the skill and ask questions. Students continue to work to apply the skills asynchronously, and teachers provide additional instruction or feedback to students via individual check-ins, small group meetings, or using technology to offer feedback on student work. This is also a time where students may work with specialists for additional support. Content taught in the RL is aligned with state standards.

30 minute  
Closing  
Meeting

The classroom teacher facilitates activities to help students reflect and solidify their learning from the day. Students may set goals for the next day/week, offer peer feedback, or share in a game or read-aloud to build community.

#### Elementary (4-6) Sample Remote Learning Schedule

30 minute  
Morning  
Meeting

Each day starts with a Morning Meeting led by the classroom teacher. Students greet one another, share with one another, and hear about what to expect on that day. Sometimes the Morning Meeting may be extended so that the teacher can offer a Social/Emotional Learning lesson, or play a game to develop the class community.

1 Hour  
Academic  
Content

Content is introduced with a synchronous/asynchronous mini-lesson (10-30 mins) and students have the opportunity to practice the skill and ask questions. Students continue to work to apply the skills asynchronously, and teachers provide additional instruction or feedback to students via individual check-ins, small group meetings, or using technology to offer feedback on student work. This is also a time where students may work with specialists for additional support. Content taught in the RL is aligned with state standards.

15 Minute  
Snack/Break/  
Recess

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1 Hour 30 Minute Academic Content	Content will usually be introduced by the classroom teacher, though additional educators may occasionally lead lessons. Other educators will regularly be supporting the students and the classroom teacher by conducting individual check-ins or running small groups with students, or offering feedback electronically.
40 Minute Lunch and Recess	Optional Friday virtual lunch groups may be offered to allow students an opportunity to eat with their friends!
40 Minute Specials	Art, Music, PE, Library
1 Hour Academic Content	Content is introduced with a synchronous/asynchronous mini-lesson (10-30 mins) and students have the opportunity to practice the skill and ask questions. Students continue to work to apply the skills asynchronously, and teachers provide additional instruction or feedback to students via individual check-ins, small group meetings, or using technology to offer feedback on student work. This is also a time where students may work with specialists for additional support. Content taught in the RL is aligned with state standards.
20 Minute Closing Meeting	The classroom teacher facilitates activities to help students reflect and solidify their learning from the day. Students may set goals for the next day/week, offer peer feedback, or share in a game or read-aloud to build community.

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## **Junior High School Sample Remote Learning Schedule**

7:30-9:30	Asynchronous lessons, assignments/homework, reading for pleasure, and independent study projects.
9:30 Advisory	Each student is assigned to an Advisory, with a cohort of students and one educator. The educator facilitates the Advisory to offer students an opportunity to build a smaller community within the larger team. Advisories may include Social/Emotional Learning lessons, community-building games, opportunities to ask questions and offer feedback about Remote Learning, organizational support for completing work, and more.
10:00-11:30 Academic & Exploratory Content	Content is introduced with a live, synchronous mini-lesson (10-30 mins) from the teacher, and students have the opportunity to practice the skill and ask questions. Students continue to work to apply the skills asynchronously, and teachers provide additional instruction or feedback to students via individual check-ins, small group meetings, or using technology to offer feedback on student work. This is also a time where students may work with specialists for additional support.
11:30 Lunch	Optional virtual lunch clubs and groups may be offered
12:00-1:40 Academic & Exploratory Content	Content will usually be introduced by the classroom teacher, though additional educators may occasionally lead lessons. Other educators will regularly be supporting the students and the classroom teacher by conducting individual check-ins or running small groups with students, or offering feedback electronically.
1:40-2:00 Afternoon Advisory	In Afternoon Advisory, the Advisory teacher facilitates activities to help students reflect on, and solidify, their learning from the day. Students may offer feedback to one another, or engage in a common game or read-aloud as a community together.

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## High School Sample Remote Learning Schedule

Academic Schedule, Remote Schedule					
	16-Sep	17-Sep	18-Sep	21-Sep	22-Sep
	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
<b>Block 1</b> 8:00 a.m.	A	E	B	F	C
<b>Block 2</b> 9:15 a.m.	B	F	C	G	D
<b>Block 3</b> 10:30 AM	C	G	D	H	A
<b>BB 11:45-12:30</b>	BB	BB	BB	BB	BB
<b>Block 4</b> 12:45	D	H	A	E	B
<b>2:00 - 3:00 p.m.</b>	<i>Synchronous Club Meetings</i>	<i>Synchronous Club Meetings</i>	<i>Synchronous Club Meetings</i>	<i>Synchronous Club Meetings</i>	<i>Synchronous Club Meetings</i>

Block 1: 8:00 a.m.

Students will follow a typical, grade-level academic schedule with synchronous and asynchronous learning opportunities for four blocks per day.

Block 2 9:15 a.m.

Block 3 10:30 a.m.

Bulldog Block and  
Lunch Break  
11:45 a.m.

Each student is assigned to a Bulldog Block, with a cohort of students and one teacher. The teacher facilitates the session to offer students an opportunity to build a smaller community within the larger school. Topics may include Social/Emotional learning lessons, community-building games, opportunities to ask questions and offer feedback about Remote Learning, and more.

Block 4 12:45 p.m.

Extra Help and Club  
Meetings 2:00 p.m.

Students will be able to communicate with classroom teachers and participate in extracurricular activities remotely.

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## To Start the Year

Back-to-School will necessarily look very different this year, and we are preparing a comprehensive orientation to Remote Learning for students at all levels. This orientation will include:

- Technology Skills Overview (How do I use the tools and apps needed for remote learning?).
- Digital Citizenship Lessons (How do I engage safely and responsibly in online learning?).
- Strategies for Remote Learning Success (this includes organizational skills, what to do when there's a problem, monitoring and mitigating distractions (YouTube videos, a pet, a sunny day...), how to reflect on learning and advocate for support when needed, etc.).
- *IF* the COVID-19 context allows, optional outdoor, distanced back-to-school meet and greets with teachers and learning cohort.

Parent and guardian education and support will be available.

## Additional Opportunities

We are exploring a number of ways to offer students social engagement and support in their learning, including:

- All support services available to students in a typical school setting will be provided in the RL, including special education supports, supports for English language learners, counseling, occupational and physical therapy. These services will look differently than they would in the typical school setting, as we will be utilizing teletherapy and other innovative approaches to make sure students are receiving the appropriate support to be successful in learning. Students with IEPs and 504s will receive those services, and our special education team will work closely with families as students adapt to their schedule. Parents and guardians will be notified as to how IEP services will be delivered in this remote environment.
- Guest speakers and virtual field trips across content areas.
- Using flex time ideology at each level to address learning gaps from the previous year, and to provide enrichment opportunities.

## Attendance and Grading

Students in Remote Learning will be expected to join into synchronous learning opportunities every day. If a student does not attend the Morning Meeting or Bulldog Block at the high school, parents/guardians will be contacted to determine whether the student is absent. As during a typical school year, parents/guardians are encouraged to contact their RL administrator if their child will be absent from learning activities.

Students in the Remote Learning model will be graded on their progress towards, and mastery of, learning standards. Students in grades PK-8 will receive the same semester-end report

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cards as their peers in the hybrid model. Students at the high school will receive letter grades commensurate with their assessments on Gradpoint and/or remote classes.

### **Switching into the Remote Learning**

If a switch to Remote Learning is necessary due to new illness or immunocompromised status of a student or within the family, it will be made swiftly with as little disruption to student learning and routines as possible.

### **How can parents and families get involved?**

There are lots of ways for parents and families to stay updated and be involved in the teaching and learning in the remote learning model:

- The Remote Learning administrator will provide weekly updates.
- Families can provide input via the district’s formal collection of feedback every few weeks throughout the fall; RL feedback will be included in that data collection and will absolutely be used to improve the student and family experience.
- Depending on the COVID-19 context we are in throughout the year, there may be opportunities to provide optional, outdoors, distanced, small group, masks-on meetups for students.

### **Option B—Hybrid Learning Model**

The “Hybrid Learning Model” is a combination of in-person and out-of-school learning. For now, our focus is on the framework of the model, and the details will follow. Once this plan is finalized, staff members and families can arrange daycare and finalize plans for the fall. There are many additional details that are either under development or noted elsewhere in this plan. Families have expressed a desire to have siblings be on the same schedule for in-person learning when in the hybrid learning model. We will make every effort to keep siblings on the same schedule.

If you choose Option B—the Hybrid Learning Model—here is what you can expect in the fall:

1. Families of preschool students will be contacted regarding preschool scheduling.
2. The K-12 student population will be divided into two cohorts: Cohort A and Cohort B.
3. Cohort A and Cohort B will each be 50% of students who will learn both in person in the school building and out of the building.



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## **Elementary Level Overview & Secondary Level Overview (K - 12)**

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Cohort A	Hybrid Out of school	Hybrid In School	Hybrid Out of School	Hybrid In School	Hybrid Out of School
Cohort B	Hybrid Out of School	Hybrid Out of School	Hybrid In School	Hybrid Out of School	Hybrid In School

*\*Attendance: Parents/Guardians to call in absences on both in-school and out-of-school learning days for their students.*

## **Synchronous Learning and Sample Hybrid Learning Schedules**

The needs of students at each grade level vary considerably—just as no two students are alike, neither are two grade spans. Students in elementary school (grades PK-6), junior high school (grades 7-8), and high school (grades 9-12), have vastly different needs. The following sample schedules are designed to be responsive to the developmental needs of learners in a particular age group. For each grade span, we provide a general outline of the day for both hybrid-in and hybrid-out learning days..

**Synchronous learning activities will not be optional.** All K-12 students are expected to attend synchronous activities assigned by their teachers, along with their peers when learning out-of-school. A primary goal of these synchronous activities, beyond their obvious academic value, is the opportunity for students to engage with their classmates and teachers. The regular teacher contact with students helps to build and maintain relationships and provide support as needed. These synchronous learning opportunities promote social-emotional well-being and develop the intercultural competencies we need to cultivate in the world today—the cognitive, affective, and behavioral skills that lead to effective and appropriate communication with other cultures.

Students at all levels will be expected to attend any synchronous instructional activities their teachers organize throughout the day. These types of activities will vary by grade level and content area, but may include read-alouds, previewing content or concepts that will be covered during the week, lab demonstrations, teacher-led group discussions, individual or small group activities, and other experiences. The number of synchronous sessions will vary from week to week, and families will be made aware of them on the weekly plans that come home each Friday, which will preview the instructional plans and student learning for the following week.

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We have created sample schedules to give you an idea of what scheduling at the elementary and secondary levels might look like, both for hybrid in-person learning and hybrid-out learning. Please know that these are only samples as our educators are in the process of developing this information now, and your child's schedule is likely to look quite different. For those of you who appreciate a visual, here is a sample [elementary schedule](#), here is a sample [junior high school schedule](#) and here is a sample of a [high school schedule](#) that can give an idea of what you can expect in the fall. For more in-depth information, the subsequent sections of this document describe how we will be approaching teaching, learning, and school operations during the upcoming school year.

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## Summary of Elementary Hybrid Learning Model

Hybrid Learning - Out	Hybrid Learning - In
<b>Starting the Day</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All students start their day with a “Daily Morning Meeting”</li> </ul>	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>During the Day</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students participate in asynchronous and synchronous activities following a specific schedule determined by the teacher</li> <li>Hybrid-Out work is designed to align with state standards and check-ins will be offered throughout the day</li> <li>As appropriate, students may also be supported and taught by various educators (e.g. special educators, specialists, counselors, math teachers and literacy specialists).</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>During the Day</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students are in school for the regular school day (8:30 a.m. - 2:45 p.m.- Mattapoisett), (8:40 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. Rochester), (8:40 a.m. - 2:57 p.m. Sippican)</li> <li>Students will follow a schedule for both academic and specialist classes.</li> <li>Recess and lunch times will be built in to the day. We anticipate that lunch will be served in classrooms.</li> </ul>
<b>Ending the Hybrid-In Day</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Closing circle ideology will be used to be closure to each school day.</li> <li>Dismissal time will be staggered to avoid overcrowding in the hallways and to facilitate maintaining social distances.</li> </ul>	

At the elementary level, students are divided into two (2) cohorts. Cohort A (students whose last name begins with A-K) will attend school in the building every Tuesday and Thursday. Cohort B (students whose last names begin with L-Z) will attend school in the building on Wednesday and Friday. All students participating in the hybrid model will be remote on Mondays. Special education students will receive specific services from the liaison and service providers as listed in their Individual Education Plan (IEP) and on an individual basis. Hybrid-Out learning will follow a full day schedule on the days that the cohort is not attending school in the building.

## Summary of Junior High School Hybrid Model

Hybrid Learning - Out	Hybrid Learning - In
<b>Starting the Day</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All students attend synchronous sessions for Morning Advisory meetings</li> </ul>	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>During the Day</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students participate in asynchronous and synchronous activities</li> <li>Synchronous check-ins are scheduled at the end of each mod during the day.</li> <li>Teachers will suggest completion times for all activities to help guide families</li> <li>The bulk of remote work is designed to allow students to work independently, but with support as needed. Students will be challenged but not frustrated.</li> <li>As appropriate, students may also be supported and taught by a variety of educators (e.g. special educators, teachers of English Language Learners, specialists, and counselors).</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>During the Day</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students are in school for the regular school day (7:25 a.m. - 2:05 p.m.).</li> <li>As appropriate, students attend approximately four to five hours of classes each day, including academics, specials, and support classes (e.g., academic support, counseling, social and emotional learning, support for English Language Learner, and other activities).</li> </ul>
<b>Ending the Hybrid-In Day</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Advisory teacher meets with all their students together (hybrid-in and hybrid-out groups join together) every afternoon to do an end of day group activity for 15 minutes.</li> <li>Dismissal time will be staggered to avoid overcrowding in the hallways and to facilitate maintaining social distances.</li> </ul>	

At the junior high school, students are assigned to one of two cohorts by alphabet in the same A-K and L-Z manner. ORRJHS students are accustomed to having seven class meetings a day. The new schedule is modeled after the high school block schedule to promote common schedules between schools and to increase opportunities for synchronous learning while in Hybrid - nout learning mode. With the hybrid schedule Cohort A would have in-person classes on Tuesday and Thursday with hybrid-out classes on Wednesday and Friday. Cohort B would have in-person classes on Wednesday and Friday with hybrid-out classes on Wednesday and Thursday. Monday would be a full hybrid-out day for both cohorts so that classes can fully engage with the teacher and all classmates. Hybrid-out learning will afford students the opportunity to engage in more independent work, with faculty support as needed and appropriate, e.g., engaging in structured activities to preview content and practice skills, reading or preparation for classes, advisory groups, special education, or support for English Language Learners (ELLs). Hybrid-out students have assigned check-ins with classroom teachers during each block where progress will be monitored, questions answered, and attendance recorded. In-person learning will see students engaging in as full a range of in-school activities as conditions permit.

## Summary of High School Hybrid Model

Hybrid Learning - Out	Hybrid Learning - In
<p style="text-align: center;"><b><i>During the Day</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Students will follow their academic schedule to engage in learning activities that are designed to allow students to work independently, but with scheduled, synchronous interactions with their assigned teacher.</li> <li>● Teachers will check in at assigned times to take attendance, monitor student work, check for understanding, and receive work submissions.</li> <li>● As appropriate, students may also be supported by a variety of educators (e.g., special educators, teachers of English Language Learners, librarians, counselors, etc.) as appropriate.</li> <li>● On Mondays, students from both cohorts come together for a synchronous session with each of their classroom teachers in 30-minute classes.</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b><i>During the Day</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Students are in school for the regular school day (7:30 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.).</li> <li>● The school will follow the traditional alternating block schedule with 4 classes per day.</li> <li>● Students will have fewer hallway transitions per day to limit exposure to large group interactions with no homeroom and no access to lockers.</li> <li>● Passing time will be extended to 15 minutes to allow for staggered class dismissals and one-way hallway traffic.</li> <li>● Class times will not rotate over 8 days</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b><i>Ending the Hybrid-In Day</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Dismissal time will be staggered to avoid overcrowding in the hallways and to facilitate maintaining social distances.</li> </ul>	

At the high school, students are assigned to one of two cohorts. ORRHS students are accustomed to an alternating, block schedule where 8 courses run over two days and classes meet for 75 minutes. Within the hybrid schedule Cohort A would have in-person classes on Tuesday and Thursday with hybrid-out classes on Wednesday and Friday. Cohort B would have in-person classes on Wednesday and Friday with hybrid-out classes on Tuesday and Thursday. Monday would be a full hybrid-out day for both cohorts so that classes can fully engage with the teacher and all classmates. Hybrid-out learning will afford students the opportunity to engage in more independent work, with faculty support as needed and appropriate, e.g., engaging in structured activities to preview content and practice skills, reading or preparation for classes, advisory groups, special education, or support for English Language Learners (ELLs). Hybrid-out students have assigned check-ins with classroom teachers during each block where progress will be monitored, questions answered, and attendance recorded. In-person learning will see students engaging in as full a range of in-school activities as conditions permit.

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## **GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND PLANNING PRIORITIES**

In the initial stages of the “back-to-school” planning process, we identified guiding principles that would drive our decision-making and the key features we hope to incorporate into our planning. At the top of the list of priorities that inform our planning and thinking is health, safety, and the well-being of our school community. This priority has shaped every aspect of our planning process, including the remote learning and hybrid models of learning that we will use to start the school year.

### **Back to School Guiding Principles**

- 1. Health, safety, and well-being of our school community above all else.**
- 2. Intentional about matters of equity and begins by first addressing the needs of our most vulnerable or marginalized student populations.**
- 3. Builds from our school-system’s mission.**
- 4. Incorporates “reflections” and “lessons learned” during this period of school closure.**
- 5. Allows for flexibility and fluidity in how we deliver instruction and strives for a continuum of services (e.g. All learning done remotely→all learning done in school buildings), acknowledging the varying student needs across the PK-12 range and responding to differences in age-appropriate ways.**
- 6. A plan that evolves to address the curricular challenges all educators face if remote learning becomes a longer-term reality (e.g. Phase I. Enrichment > Phase II. Power/Bridge Standard > Phase III. Some Form of Hybrid Learning in Fall).**
- 7. Ensure that plans are sustainable and take into account the mental, physical, social, and emotional needs of the school community.**

### **Data Sources Informing our Plans**

Throughout the three-month period of school closure and into the summer, we collected a variety of information to better understand the school community’s remote learning experience and implementation challenges. We gathered data through various means, recognizing that this is a complex situation that needs to be understood from many perspectives, and acknowledging that each methodology has its own strengths and drawbacks. The data collections described

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below are enriched by the feedback we received from survey data, stakeholders' emails and other communications, and ongoing discussions with students, staff, and families. Further, we take the present COVID-19 context—the assumption that the pandemic likely will remain well into the 2020-21 school year—and factor it into the analysis. The lessons learned during the 2019-2020 school year, along with further developments over the summer, will continue to inform our planning for the upcoming school year.

## **Staff and Parent Surveys**

Surveys were administered throughout the spring and used as a tool to gather perspectives from a broad range of stakeholders. We administered a staff survey in June and July 2020 focused on staff experiences with remote learning, their ability to return to the buildings in the fall, and technology needs. We administered two parent surveys, one in June, 2020 and another in July, 2020. The first survey focused on initial experiences with remote learning. The second focused more on planning for the fall.

Please find the complete data set from the most recent parent & guardian survey (updated regularly) below:

[https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1CI7StjbCSwzF3X12p4NJ\\_E0kscR8RfL2A1of5ZGr3A/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1CI7StjbCSwzF3X12p4NJ_E0kscR8RfL2A1of5ZGr3A/edit?usp=sharing)

## **Other Considerations**

Beyond the experiences of our students, staff, and families, we also considered information from many other sources and consulted experts across disciplines, as we developed “back-to-school” plans for the upcoming school year. Examples include:

- COVID-19 cases and trends by town
- Best practices from our nursing staff, the local Board of Health, the MA Department of Health, and the CDC
- Current inventory of personal protective equipment (PPE) and future needs
- Assessment of facilities and spaces
- Enrollment and allowable class sizes
- Curriculum, instruction, and assessments
- Budgetary and fiscal constraints
- State and federal guidelines and requirements
- Examples of plans from other states, districts and countries
- Special population needs
- Developmental needs of students
- Busing and transportation
- Staffing patterns and personnel
- Technology

# **YOUR HEALTH, SAFETY, AND WELL-BEING**

## **How the COVID-19 Virus Spreads**

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Coronaviruses are respiratory viruses and are generally spread through respiratory secretions (droplets from coughs and sneezes) of an infected person to another person.<sup>2</sup> There is preliminary evidence that airborne transmission—in which the virus spreads in the much smaller particles from exhaled air, known as aerosols.<sup>3</sup> Because of this, it is important to do what we can to improve ventilation of indoor spaces and encourage outdoor activities when possible. Given the nature of the pandemic, we know it is impossible to completely eradicate the risks associated with COVID-19. In Massachusetts, however, we have seen evidence that risk can be mitigated if we practice our core value of “caring for ourselves and others,” by engaging in good respiratory hygiene, proper handwashing, maintaining appropriate social distances, wearing a covering on the face to stop the spread of germs, avoiding touching our eyes, nose, mouth or face, and, most importantly, by staying home when we are sick. We expect that all students and staff will incorporate these healthy practices, making them a part of their daily routine when we begin the 2020-2021 school year.

## Testing and Protocols for Responding to COVID-19 Scenarios

On July 17, 2020, the Commissioner of Education sent Superintendents a document that can be accessed [here](#), outlining protocols to responding to COVID-19 scenarios in school, on the bus, or in community settings. While there are multiple challenges associated with implementing the State protocols, the guidance is extremely helpful, and we plan to follow these procedures. The guidance answers the following questions:

- What should a district do if there is a symptomatic individual—at home, on the bus, or at school?
- What should a district do if someone in the community tests positive for COVID-19—be it a student, teacher, staff, bus driver, or one of their household members or close contacts?
- Who should get tested for COVID-19 and when?
- In what circumstances would someone need to quarantine (when they have been exposed but are not sick) or isolate (when they are sick)?
- What should school districts do to monitor COVID-19 spread in their communities?

Many have asked about testing, tracing, and isolation, which are important questions also addressed in the State guidance as follows:

It is important to note that testing, combined with contact tracing and isolation, helps control the spread of COVID-19 in Massachusetts. **All test results, both positive and negative, are reported to the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH).** When a person has a positive COVID-19 test, it is the local board of health or the Massachusetts Community Tracing Collaborative that will reach out to provide support

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<sup>2</sup> Source: Massachusetts Department of Public Health website accessed at 8:32 a.m. on June 27, 2020 <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/about-covid-19>.

<sup>3</sup> Source: Morawska L., Cao J. Airborne transmission of SARS-CoV-2: the world should face the reality. *Environ. Int.* 2020;105730 doi: 10.1016/j.envint.2020.105730.



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so these individuals can remain safely in medical isolation. They will also ask for help to identify close contacts. These organizations will then reach out to the individual's close contacts to provide important information that is aimed to stop the spread of the virus, including how to safely isolate or quarantine. While these organizations will provide support, to further assist with contact tracing the student/family and staff are asked to reach out to their personal contacts and notify the schools.

Finally, it is important to note that school systems in Massachusetts do not arrange COVID-19 testing—these are the responsibilities of Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MA DPH) and health care providers. For more information, the July 2020 MA DPH guidance on testing of persons with suspect COVID-19 is [here](#). The COVID-19 Test Site Locator is [here](#).

## **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Preparedness**

On March 13, 2020, all schools in the Tri-Town Community closed for a two-week period, which was extended by Governor Baker twice and eventually through the end of the 2019-2020 school year. Immediately, when we first announced the initial school closure in our towns in March, we placed a large quantity order of hand-sanitizer, hand wipes, and cleaning supplies. We also recently placed a substantial order for supplies that will help to keep us healthy and safe. The schools can receive reimbursement for supplies through funding made available through the CARES Act. Supplies purchased to date include the following:

- Nitrile and vinyl gloves
- N95 Masks
- Masks (adult and child-size)
- Reusable face masks
- Face Shields
- Eye Goggles
- Gowns
- Plexiglass barriers
- Scrub tops for designated personnel
- Lab coats for nursing staff
- Pulse Oximeters
- Infrared Thermometers
- Hand Sanitizer Dispensers (Classroom)
- Hand Sanitizer Dispensers (Standing)
- Hand Sanitizer Refills
- Sanitizer Wipes

The acquisition of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) may be a challenge for school systems, as we will compete with other public school districts in Massachusetts and throughout the world. As we track the pandemic, we will plan to place additional orders, and we will continue to closely observe the lead times of consumables to ensure that the supplies will be available as needed.

## **School Safety Protocols**

School personnel and appropriate stakeholders are collaborating to develop protocols to keep our students and staff safe. Walk-thrus of facilities are being conducted regularly to prepare them for COVID-19 readiness. As recommended by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) safety protocols are being developed to address the following:

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- What to do if sick - learn more about steps to take if a child or staff member is sick and presents with COVID-19-like symptoms;
  - Handwashing and hygiene;
  - Mask/face coverings (how to do, wear, remove, and store);
  - Transportation and capacities;
  - Safe ways for students to enter and exit the school building and classrooms;
  - Safe ways to eat lunch;
  - Plans for bathrooms, air dryers/water fountains, provide paper towels;
  - Administer safety protocols and/or procedures - what to do if they are not followed;

### ***Masks/Face Coverings***

- All staff must wear face coverings or masks covering his/her nose and mouth at all times, with the exception of those for whom it is not safe to do so due to medical condition, disability impact, or other health or safety considerations. Instruction on masks/face coverings will be provided by District nurses.
- All visitors and vendors to the schools must wear masks or face/covering.
- Masks/face coverings should be provided by the student/family, but extra disposable face masks will be made available for students who need them. Reusable masks/face coverings provided by families should be washed by families daily.
- Transparent face masks provide the opportunity for more visual cues and will be provided as an alternative for teachers of students who are deaf and hard of hearing, as well as those providing phonics instruction.
- Face shields may be an option for those students with medical, behavioral, or other challenges who are unable to wear masks/face coverings.
- Mask breaks should occur throughout the day.
- Masks/face coverings are required to be worn by everyone on the bus during school bus transportation.
- Mask disposal: If a reusable mask breaks and needs to be thrown out or if a single-use mask needs to be disposed of, it should be placed into the nearest trash can by the individual who wore the mask. The individual should immediately put on a new mask after washing their hands.
- Noncompliance is considered a health and safety violation that will not be tolerated and disciplinary action may be taken. This does not include those excused from wearing a mask.

### **School Attendance Guidelines**

- Flexible attendance policies will be implemented, and all students and staff must stay home when sick.
- Staff and family procedures you must follow before coming to school.
- Students and staff must stay home if they do not feel well. This is very important in preventing the spread of COVID-19. We will relax the rules on attendance to ensure that

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we are not placing an undue burden on families to have their children report to school when sick. The State may release guidance on attendance requirements in the future.

- Many higher education institutions are utilizing staff attestations forms with a daily self-checklist to review COVID-19 symptoms. In August, we will provide staff with a checklist that they can use to self-monitor possible symptoms.
- Students and staff with a temperature above 100 degrees should not attend school until they have been fever-free (under 100 degrees) for three (3) days and without the use of antipyretic medication, such as Tylenol, Motrin, Advil, or Ibuprofen.
- Students and sick staff members should not return to school until they have met the criteria established by the Massachusetts Department of Health (MPDH) to isolate and/or quarantine. Students and staff will check with their school nurse prior to returning as well. A safe return to school is based on symptoms, duration of symptoms, test results, and clearance by the Town Health Department.

### **When a Student or Staff Member becomes Ill**

- On July 17, 2020, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education released new protocols that we will follow when a student or staff member becomes ill. You can access them [here](#).
- Any student or staff member exhibiting COVID-19-like symptoms must stay home. Staff and families should not come to school if they become sick with COVID-19 [symptoms](#), test positive for COVID-19, or have been [exposed](#) to someone with COVID-19 symptoms or a confirmed or suspected case. Staff and families will be asked to report any illness symptoms that precludes them from attending school, to be able to identify symptom surveillance.
- Staff and [children](#) with COVID-19 [symptoms](#) (such as fever, cough, or shortness of breath) at school will be separated from well students/staff. Individuals who are sick will be triaged by the school nurse and asked to either go home immediately or to a healthcare facility depending on the severity of the symptoms. Any individual who becomes sick at school will be triaged for further medical assessment and testing based on their symptoms. They will be asked to follow [CDC guidance](#) for caring for oneself and others who are sick.
- Each school will have a designated “sick area,” where staff and/or students will be triaged and assessed for an appropriate disposition. Sick students and staff will be separated from well students and staff who are well.
- School nurses and other healthcare providers should use [standard and transmission-based precautions](#) when caring for sick people. See also [what healthcare personnel should know](#), a protocol that explains what we need to know about caring for patients with confirmed or possible COVID-19 infection.
- If the nurse/school personnel are calling an ambulance or bringing someone to the hospital, they will alert the dispatcher that the person may have COVID-19.
- Families need to provide the school nurse with emergency contacts, indicating individuals who will be able to come to the school and pick up their child if they become

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sick during the school day. Dismissing sick children (and staff) in a timely fashion is imperative for the safety of all.

- Students who are not wearing a mask and are showing signs of illness will be asked to wear a mask to reduce the spread of the illness until they leave the school premises.

### **Clean and Disinfect**

- Close off areas used by a sick person and do not use these areas until after [cleaning and disinfecting](#).
- Wait at least 24 hours before cleaning and disinfecting. If 24 hours is not feasible, wait as long as possible. Ensure [safe and correct use](#) and storage of [cleaning and disinfection products](#), including storing products securely away from children.

### **Clean and Sanitized Restrooms**

We continue to follow the guidance below from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), which includes the ongoing maintenance of restrooms, ensuring they have functional toilets, clean and disinfected surfaces, and handwashing supplies. We will continue to take the following precautions:

- Ensure that we operate with functional toilets.
- [Clean and disinfect](#) regularly using [EPA-registered disinfectants](#) that are effective against SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, particularly high-touch surfaces such as faucets, toilets, doorknobs, and light switches.
- Clean, and disinfect restrooms daily or more often if possible.
- Instructions for proper hand washing will be posted in restrooms.
- Follow the [guidance for cleaning and disinfecting](#) to develop, implement, and maintain a plan to perform regular cleanings to reduce the risk of exposure to COVID-19.
- Regularly stock with supplies for handwashing, including soap and paper towels for drying hands or hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol and no touch trash cans.

### **Notify Health Officials and Close Contacts**

- In accordance with state and local laws and regulations, school nurses/administrators should notify the Town Health Departments, staff, and families immediately of any case of COVID-19 while maintaining confidentiality in accordance with the [Americans with Disabilities Act \(ADA\)](#).
- The School Nurses will work collaboratively with the Offices of Public Health to identify individuals who have tested positive and/or who had [close contact](#) with a person diagnosed with COVID-19. Individuals and families will be instructed to stay home and [self-monitor for symptoms](#), following [CDC guidance](#) if symptoms develop.

### **Transportation Safety and Other Considerations**

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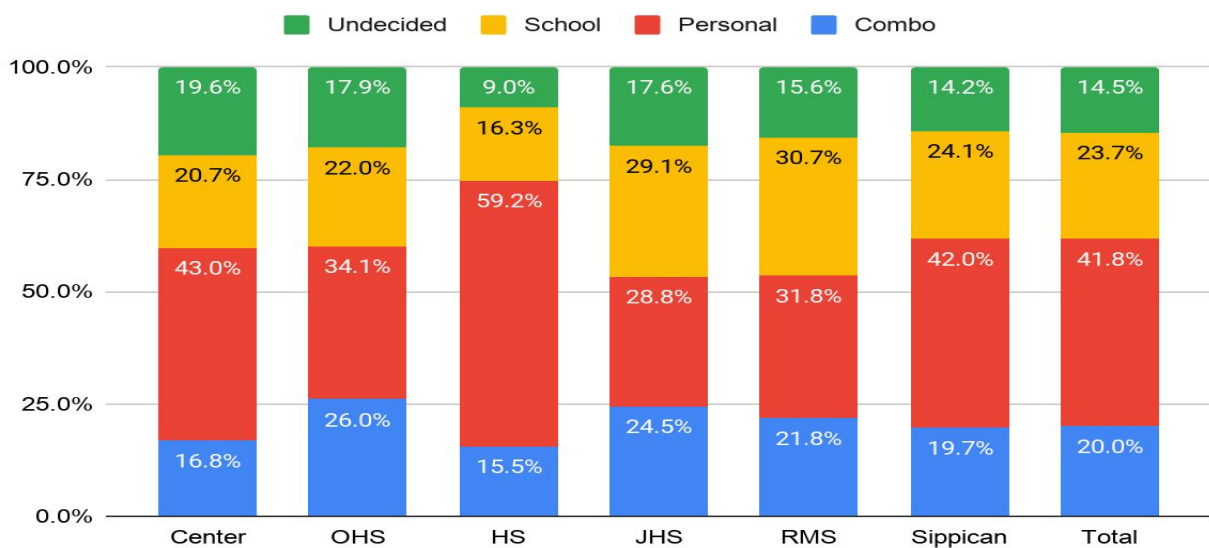
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There are no easy answers for transportation during a pandemic when social distancing is necessary. “The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) Activities and Initiatives Supporting the COVID-19 Response and the President’s Plan for Opening America Up Again” found [here](#), raises more questions than answers.

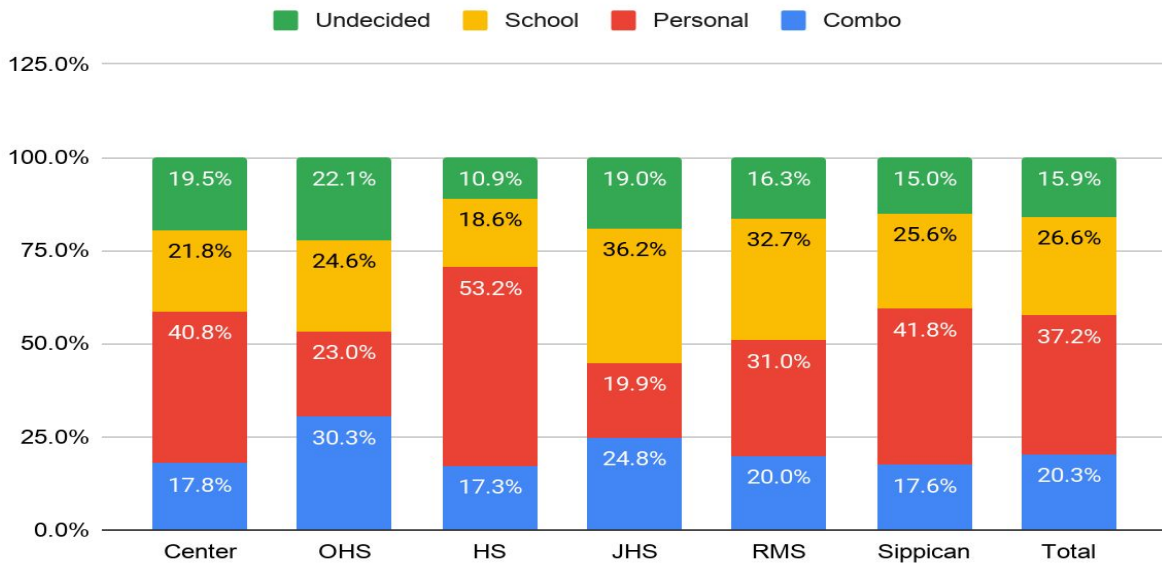
### Bus Ridership

*When surveyed in July, 2020, our family reported:*

#### **Morning Transportation Data:**



#### **Afternoon Transportation Data:**



The following safety precautions will be followed on school buses:

1. Masks will be worn on buses at all times;
2. Windows on buses will be kept open to circulate fresh air;
3. Students will be assigned to a seat, and staff will mark their seat locations in advance;
4. Whenever possible, an additional staff member will be on the bus to monitor and remind students of safety protocols;
5. Implement routine cleaning of buses.

Currently, we are in the process of exploring routing options, establishing cleaning and sanitizing schedules, determining personal protective equipment (PPE) requirements for drivers and riders, and special education van capacities.

We strongly encourage families to drop children off, carpool, or walk with their child to reduce possible exposure on buses.

## SCHOOL FACILITIES

### Preparing our Schools

Both families and staff are eager to return to teaching in learning in their school buildings. In the most recent family survey, when asked if schools should reopen (either full-time or part-time) this fall, 69.2% said they would send their child to school. We have taken a number of school safety measures to minimize risk to all members of our school community to ensure we can safely return to school while the COVID-19 risk remains. First, we conducted a

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classroom-by-classroom “Facility Needs Assessment.” The purpose of the Facilities Needs Assessment is to determine the number of teaching spaces and classrooms in each school that provide adequate square footage, based on approved social distancing guidelines, to safely seat students and staff. We are in the process of analyzing air handling and filtration system capacity to ensure adequate, safe, and high quality ventilation in teaching spaces. We have identified, measured, and procured plexiglass screening for high traffic areas, such as library and administrative offices, providing enhanced safety for staff and students.

***Visitors:***

At this point in time, outside visitors and guests are discouraged, except for contracted service providers for the purpose of special education, required support services, or program monitoring as authorized by the school or district. With that said:

- For those who need to conduct business in the schools, we are encouraging you to call the office first to see if the information can be provided via an electronic method (i.e. online registration).
- Masks or face coverings will be expected from all guests into the school.
- Track visitor log: A log of all visitors must be kept and maintained, with the date, contact phone number, arrival/departure times, and areas visited within the building for each visit. This includes vendors, itinerant District employees, and contracted employees.

***Playgrounds:***

Playgrounds can be used with staff monitoring to ensure physical distancing and masking. Additional staff will be added for coverage and/or schedules will be staggered to assist with this. High-touch surfaces made of plastic or metal will be cleaned and disinfected at least daily or between use for recess or by cohorts.

## **Assessing Air Quality Risk**

Some members of our school community have expressed concerns about classroom air quality, particularly in aging or overcrowded school buildings. Respiratory droplets and aerosols carried through the air are what spread the COVID-19 disease. HVAC systems are designed to circulate fresh air into the buildings. The systems at our school buildings are effective and efficient and circulate the levels of fresh air to keep the inhabitants of the school buildings safe. Aerosolization is a significant concern, which is why we have implemented a three-step process to ensure the school building air quality meets safety standards.

1. The first step in the process is to analyze the fresh air exchange and air quality in all school buildings, which we do on a regular basis.
2. The second step is to have our HVAC systems inspected and serviced.



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3. Once we receive the detailed information and reports we will share with appropriate stakeholders and design action plans.

## **EQUITY AND STUDENT ENGAGEMENT**

### **English Language Learner (ELL) Supports**

Our English Language Learner (ELL) teacher has consistently connected with our English Learners (ELs), and their families. These home-school relationships were an important factor in enabling the families in our program to make the transition to remote learning. Through the coordination of our Technology Department, all families in need were provided with electronic devices and Internet access.

As we begin the 2020-2021 school year, the ELL Department will continue to assist our English learners in their language acquisition and support students in developing the linguistic skills to succeed in their content classrooms through the provision of language instruction via a variety of methods, whether in-person or remotely, depending on student and family needs and circumstances. New students may need to have their English skills assessed. You will be contacted by the ELL department to set up a time for testing if needed.

## **SPECIAL EDUCATION**

### **Overview of Special Education Supports**

Special education educators often have particularly close connections with their students; therefore, ongoing communication and meaningful partnerships with families continues to be of paramount importance to us. As we move into the start of the new school year, special educators will be collaborating with related service providers, instructional assistants, general educators, and others who support children in Special Education, ensuring that recommendations for activities are appropriate and accessible whether they occur in-person or remotely. The collaboration that took place during the spring closures will continue into the new school year to provide students with their IEP services.

The District is dedicated to providing a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) to our students, consistent with the need to protect the health and safety of students with disabilities and those individuals providing education, specialized instruction, and related services. Students will receive their IEP services in the fall, with some in-person and some remote opportunities. In support of some of our more vulnerable populations, students will have the choice to attend in-person full time. Transition planning and services will continue. Specialized



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PPE will be provided when the instructional needs require closer proximity. As we consider social distancing requirements, the schools will factor in the additional special education personnel who enter classrooms to provide accommodations and modifications. IEP meetings will be held mainly remotely to limit the number of people in a building, and the District will continue to work with families to meet timelines or agree to extensions for Initial Evaluations, Reevaluations, and IEP Team Meetings. The District will make every effort to maintain as much in-person instruction as is safely possible should a full closure once again be necessary.

Students with disabilities, along with their peers in general education, will be assessed to evaluate skill gaps. In addition, special education progress reports and data on levels of performance towards goals prior to closure will be reviewed for progress and regression post-closure. For students in the Extended School Year (ESY) program, progress reports and discussions on individual levels of current performance will be important in assessing skill gaps and regression.

Students in Out-of-District Schools will continue to receive their services either remotely or in-person as directed by the individual schools. Our Office of Student Services will continue to receive remote learning plans and progress reports on all students as appropriate.

## **More In-Person Opportunities for Complex Students and At-Risk Youth**

Throughout the period of closure, feedback from parents, students, and staff has consistently conveyed the school community's profound sense of loss with the inability to deliver in-person instruction and maintain close connections during the COVID-19 pandemic. Optimizing the amount of in-person opportunities with in-person instruction is a priority, as we further develop the special education component of the back-to-school plan.

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (MA DESE) has focused on having districts make at-risk youth or students with disabilities a high priority for in-person instruction when developing plans for re-opening in the fall. MA DESE recommends considering the following when prioritizing students for in-person instruction:

- Students with multiple disabilities;
- Students who will need time to learn new procedures and protocols to increase their successful reentry to school in the fall;
- Students whose level of engagement with remote learning during closure was low.

The new "Hybrid Model of Learning" will include both in-person instructional opportunities, as well as synchronous instruction and asynchronous offerings. As always, flexibility will be key to ensuring that a model of service fits the individual needs of students and families, especially within the remote environment.

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A focus on in-person instruction will be the delivery of related services, such as speech and language, occupational therapy, physical therapy, and reading. Protective Personal Equipment (PPE) and training for staff will be required prior to beginning any in-person instruction.

In a learning environment that rotates between in-person (in school buildings) and remote learning, some services and instruction will be delivered synchronously through online platforms that allow for optimal instruction, communication, and observation between therapist and student.

Should full closure occur after the start of the school year, the schools will explore continuing in-person services on a one-to-one basis. Such a decision will be in agreement with parents, staff, and the Board of Health guidelines.

### **In-Person vs. Remote Services**

In many cases, the individual circumstances of staff and student health and safety may dictate the availability of in-person services, including speech, occupational therapy, physical therapy, orientation/mobility, visual, hearing, and reading support. Students may receive appointment-based services. However, there will certainly be times when teletherapy services are safest and most appropriate.

All Speech and Language Therapists are currently in the process of completing their ten hours of teletherapy training through the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA). Additionally, quiet rooms will need to be assigned to individual therapists in buildings and equipment, such as headphones and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for closer distance instruction provided. Once school begins, therapists will be scheduling students for in-person services or synchronous teletherapy services, depending on the individual needs and schedule of students. These services will be delivered individually or in small groups. Schedules will need to accommodate the time needed to sanitize these rooms after each student or small group. Parents of children participating in the Hybrid Learning Model can expect that their children will receive a combination of in-person and teletherapies, as required.

### **Preschool Special Education - Project Grow**

The District recognizes that remote learning is especially difficult for preschoolers, and in many cases, not at all appropriate for their learning. Preschool students in Special Education will be invited to participate in in-person schooling commensurate with their IEPs. Additionally, related services for young children (Speech, Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, English Language Learner support) are most effective when children and adults are together in the same space, and our little ones can manipulate materials, see the adult's face, and receive immediate, in-person, feedback. Given the small-group nature of preschool, Project Grow classrooms will be offering consistent programming, while keeping groups small enough to ensure safety protocols.

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Staff will be utilizing professional learning time to further enhance our capacity for appropriate and engaging remote learning activities and plans should there be a need for another district closure during the school year. If another closure becomes necessary, the schools will make every effort to provide limited and safe in-person instruction. More information will be provided directly to families of enrolled preschoolers once Student Choice Form responses have been received.

## **Student Orientation to New Learning Models**

Students' return to school in September—whether as part of the Remote Learning Model or the Hybrid Learning Model—will include a robust orientation to the coming school year. Our staff recognizes the need to spend time reconnecting with students and helping them reflect on their identity as learners following the emergency school closure and a summer hiatus. This need to build strong relationships with students will be true in the fall of 2020, more than ever. In order to prepare our community to engage with the levels of challenge and rigor appropriate to each individual student within these new learning models, staff will work collaboratively with each other and with families and students to provide the solid social-emotional foundation and conditions for thriving during the coming school year, including attending to students' basic psychological needs prior to diving into more traditional academic content. Specific time will be set aside at the start of school to reflect and reconnect.

We all will be learning how to function within this new educational landscape, and to that end, staff will orient themselves and their students to the social norms of the physical and digital environments in which we will operate. This training will include explicit instruction in health and safety protocols and extensive review of acceptable and responsible-use practices for synchronous and asynchronous virtual learning activities. As has become the expectation for all staff in our schools, we will strive to make this instruction inclusive for the various identities all our students and families hold, and we welcome feedback and partnership in that endeavor from and with our community at large.

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## Feasibility Study

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) provided all Superintendents with a series of class size examples on June 30, 2020. In one of the examples DESE provided, they indicate that 32 students can fit into a 750 square foot room—an undersized classroom by most standards. By comparison, the Massachusetts School Building Authority uses a standard classroom size of approximately 950 square feet today, so newer school buildings are likely to exceed DESE’s 32 student estimate. The DESE three (3) foot example—absent any feasibility study—clearly demonstrates that for the most part, all students in any school would fit into their designated classroom spaces. Nevertheless, we conducted the feasibility study, as DESE indicated it could be useful in leveraging additional funds for public education.

We recognize that schools play an important role in our communities and ideally we want to be back in our schools full-time, all students, and all staff members. However, based on our feasibility findings - we do not believe based on guidelines and recommendations that we can safely return at full capacity. Moreover, we have significant concerns regarding transportation restrictions and needs. We recognize that this decision creates inconveniences for some families and hardships for others.

## A Process for Identifying Learning Gaps

During the period of emergency closure families and staff expressed concern that their students are “falling behind,” as were families across the Commonwealth and nationwide. We are in the midst of a pandemic, we share these concerns, and we are working proactively to address them.

In the spring, all educators PK-12, worked to track the priority standards as identified by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. We tracked the student progress made during school closure and identified the standards that will need to be addressed this coming school year.

The goal in all of this is to develop a curriculum that is flexible and sustainable under learning conditions that are unusual and challenging for all involved. One significant difference from the learning that happened in the spring is that expectations will be very different for student learning. Assignments will not be optional, and the focus will be on both social-emotional well being of the students (a major focus of our work in the spring) and their traditional academic growth. To the extent possible, we will be returning to the norms we all recognize—teachers teaching students directly, students working on assignments and passing them in for grades, and students engaged in a wider range of classes and activities. Additionally, the various screening tools and diagnostic assessments typically used will continue to be used to identify areas of need for all students.

## Differentiated Learning

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Both prior to and during closure, students and families expressed a need for more differentiated learning opportunities. Differentiation benefits all learners. It provides for different paces of learning, varied resources to match learning styles and interests, and varied products to demonstrate learning. It allows for students who want to stretch to try new things in new ways, and it provides options for students who want or need to take more time on a topic or skill. In the words of one of our educators, when given the opportunity to be challenged, students often surprise us. As we work to eliminate systemic barriers in our schools, we believe this approach holds promise. What may appear to be a small change in our instructional practices can have a big impact when it comes to student equity and access. Practices like these that are taken to scale have the potential to provide more equitable learning opportunities and close achievement gaps that have persisted for years.

Differentiation also requires that our teachers work together to co-plan and organize instruction that meets the needs of all students. Special educators and teachers of English Language Learners (ELL) bring a wealth of knowledge and skill to designing effective learning for their students and regular education teachers, and all students benefit from co-constructing lessons rather than adapting them after the fact.

We also know that students' equity and access needs are varied in a remote learning environment. Technology-based instruction offers new ways to enhance student access, but we must be intentional when designing instruction to fully achieve this benefit.

## **Feedback, Grading, and Assessments**

A new and significant challenge noted by families was related to the optional nature of learning activities offered during the closure. Accountability for learning is important and the optional nature of work during the spring was a challenge for many students, staff, and families. It is important to remember that the focus of much of the work in the spring was to facilitate student engagement, support them emotionally, and to provide maximum flexibility for families and staff during a stressful and uncertain time.

We also know that meaningful educator feedback is critical to learning. Data collected throughout the spring indicates our families and students are looking for more frequent and detailed feedback from educators and our educators are craving this as well.

Feedback to students comes in a variety of forms (both formal and informal) and has a variety of purposes. The most useful for teachers and students is feedback that helps inform instruction and meet learners where they are. This information also provides needed feedback for students and families so they may also reflect on how they are progressing and make adjustments.

At this point, we are planning to resume use of our elementary standards based report card for next year, with the likelihood of minor adjustments based on the actual content on which we are

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able to teach and fairly assess students. The secondary level will utilize their typical report cards.

A key element in the process will be more consistency and continuity across grade spans and across schools at the same level. Families can expect to see common expectations and structures in terms of nature of assignments, length of assignments, feedback tools and executive functioning support for all students.

## **Performing Arts, Physical Education/Health, and Visual Arts**

Our schools truly value, appreciate, and love our performing arts and extracurricular activities.

Families and staff have been wondering how we will be able to sustain our Arts and Physical Education/Wellness classes given the need for social distancing. The K-12 specialists are planning to deliver rich curricula during both remote and in-person weeks for the Hybrid Model students, as well as the RL students. They will be able to be extremely flexible in how the curriculum is delivered and want to be mindful of the safety of the students. Specific strategies and modifications to be employed by our Performing Arts, Visual Arts and Physical Education teachers for the 2020-21 school year include:

- Focus instruction on outdoor activities (weather permitting) that promote lifelong fitness, stress relief, and healthy diet whenever possible. This focus is more important now than ever as we see the rise in the effects of COVID-19 in people with comorbidities.
- When indoor activities are unavoidable, Performing Arts, Visual Arts and Physical Education teachers will divide students into smaller groups and spread activities across multiple class spaces.
- Performing Arts, Visual Arts and Physical Education teachers will maximize opportunities to avoid sharing any equipment among students along with encouraging students to provide their own equipment to use when possible (e.g., instruments, sticks/mallets, paint brushes).
- Some students will need art supplies for home use.

## **TECHNOLOGY**

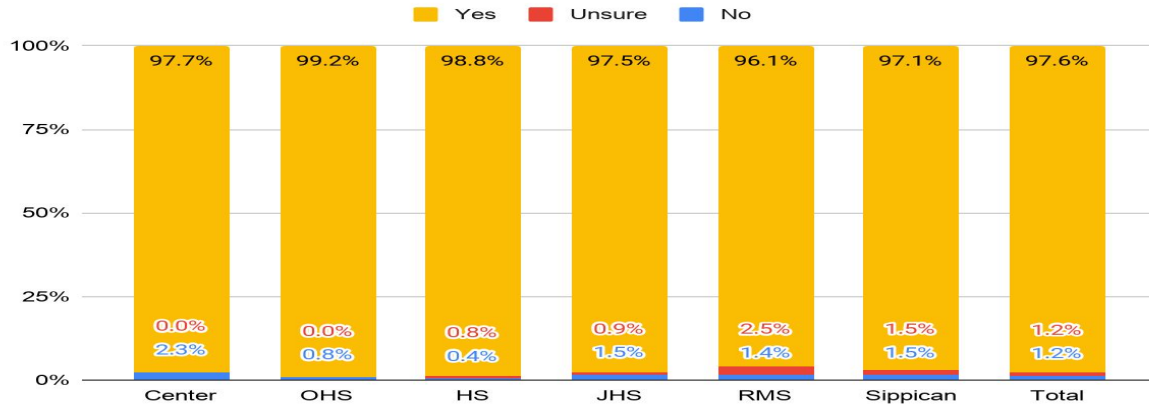
The Technology department played a significant role supporting remote teaching, learning, and working during the spring school closure period. The department provided approximately 500 devices to our students during last year's school closure. The department also provided devices for support staff and other stakeholders which allowed them to support students in the classroom and also helped the district to continue to operate smoothly during the closure. .

Like all districts across the Commonwealth, the sudden school closure required our technologists to quickly adapt teaching and operations to a remote environment, with our

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technology tools as a cornerstone.

Consistent with previous data, overall family access to reliable technology also continues to be a strength. The majority of families reported they have access to the Internet at home.



## Tech Tools You Can Use

In looking ahead and reflecting upon our remote schooling experience this spring, the Technology Department, along with other staff across the district, are looking at the tools that we used and how we can best improve our delivery of instruction in the event that remote or hybrid learning environments are part of our future.

Educators will continue to have access to Google's suite of collaboration and communication tools which greatly support teaching and learning in a remote environment. These tools allow students to demonstrate learning and acquire new skills, easily complete assignments, communicate with the teacher, maintain a sense of community, and collaborate with peers in a safe environment. Additionally, based on student and teacher feedback, the District and Technology Department are looking to provide increased student access to additional tools which will support further collaboration for students related to group projects, help support peer relationships and continue to provide a sense of community.

The Technology Department and staff continue to partner with district leaders as we plan curriculum to ensure that we have the right tools and resources to support students in all learning environments, that are:

- Aligned with curriculum and instruction
- Appropriate for use with students
- Are not duplicative with other available tools
- Can be supported by other departments, as needed
- Can be fiscally sustained
- Can be made available in time for instruction



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Our district is committed to maintaining a core group of digital tools in order to make remote learning more accessible to students and easy for families to access and support. Strategic focus on a core set of tools (i.e. a less is more approach) can help achieve consistency, enhance the ability of grade levels and/or departments to provide critical support and opens up the opportunity to achieve deeper capacity and skill building among staff to effectively use tools. This core group of tools includes:

- [Google Classroom](#)
- [Google Drive](#)
- [Google Meet](#)
- [Google Chat](#)
- [Screencastify](#)
- [Zoom](#)

After successfully using Zoom among staff and for public meetings throughout the spring and consultation with other districts, educators will be able to use Zoom with students. Staff and student feedback suggests in some cases Zoom has features and functionality that could enhance the remote learning experience not currently available in Google Meet. For more about Zoom security features, see [here](#). At the same time, Google Meet has (e.g. see [here](#) for recent enhancements), and continues to rapidly evolve and improve its features (e.g. potential new features that would allow users to more easily set up breakout rooms). Although the exact timeline on these planned improvements is unknown, the district will continue to monitor development of this tool and continue to provide support staff in how they can effectively use new Google Meet features for remote learning and work.

Educators also will continue to have access to communication tools which will allow them to share information with parents and families through websites, email and conferencing tools.

Our learning from this spring has resulted in our looking to also provide learning opportunities for families to better understand the digital learning tools that their children use and how they can support students in a variety of ways in a remote learning environment. This may include opportunities to learn about devices, software, and how to help students be successful in a remote or hybrid learning environment.

## **Student Data Privacy**

As a district, we will continue to follow student data privacy laws which help keep our students safe during their online experiences. We understand that students need tools that promote engagement and learning while at the same time, ensure a level of safety while working online. Our district continues to maintain and refine processes for using software and apps and how to request the use of those software/apps, as we work to protect student data. Digital literacy content will be part of the first week of school activities—before academic and specialist classes begin—to help make students safe users and consumers of digital tools and resources. In



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addition, we are planning continued professional learning opportunities for parents and families around technology and curriculum and instruction.

## **Deploying 1:1 Devices for Students**

Our district and the Technology Department were able to respond quickly and thoughtfully to the need for devices this spring. We developed processes for cleaning and deployment that ensured timely and safe ways for students to get devices. We also developed safe ways for the technology staff to support remote learning by opening a remote technology office for repairs, or if additional technology needs arose for students and staff.

This model was highly successful and will be replicated again with slight refinements based on any of the learning models that the district needs to pursue.

While our district was able to offer an extremely high level of access to our students and families, we did face challenges in acquiring devices that would allow students in need to access Wi-Fi. The sudden closure of schools across the nation made it extremely difficult to get devices for Wi-Fi access. As a result of our experience this spring, we are working to proactively acquire additional Wi-Fi devices that can help support families during remote learning experiences if needed.

## **PERSONNEL AND STAFF SUPPORT**

All work assignment requests are currently being vetted by staff by our Human Resources Director. We are using a two-step process to determine eligibility for a remote learning accommodation for staff. First, we are following the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines for determining which health-related concerns rise to the level of immunocompromised.

If you have questions or would like to discuss concerns about your fall work assignment, the Human Resource Director can assist you. Please contact Sue Cunningham at 508-758-2772 x1939 or email her at [suecunningham@oldrochester.org](mailto:suecunningham@oldrochester.org) for confidential support.

Employees can also find information about paid sick leave and expanded Family and Medical Leave Act under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act [here](#).



**Last Updated: August 5, 2020**