

# DESE Preliminary School Reopening Plan Summary

READING PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
STAFF AND ADMINISTRATION

## DESE PRELIMINARY SCHOOL REOPENING PLAN SUMMARY

On June 25, 2020, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) released [initial guidance](#) for school reopening that prioritizes getting students and staff safely back to school in-person, following a comprehensive set of health and safety requirements. Through this guidance, DESE required schools to create a plan that includes three models: 1) in-person learning with new safety requirements; 2) a hybrid of in-person and remote learning; and 3) remote learning.

The reopening approach is built on a thorough review of current medical and scientific literature and was developed after extensive consultation with medical professionals from Massachusetts General Hospital, the Massachusetts COVID-19 Command Center's Medical Advisory Board, and others. Based on the current public health data and COVID-19 trends in Massachusetts, the medical community supports the return of Massachusetts students to in-person learning, with appropriate health and safety guidelines in place.

This submission form is Step 1, due on or before July 31, 2020.

This online form consists of the following sections:

- **Part I** asks for the district's contact information, key findings from the district's feasibility study on in-person learning, and districts' preliminary thinking about which of the three reopening models it may use to open the school year this fall.
- **Part II** asks districts to provide a brief description of each of the three reopening models districts have been asked to develop: 1) in-person learning with new safety requirements; 2) hybrid learning, and 3) remote learning. Each model must include support for High Needs students (defined as students who belong to one or more of the following groups: students with disabilities, current or former English learners, and/or economically disadvantaged students).

**Please note that this is a preliminary plan and only includes the information that DESE requires for this submission. A more comprehensive plan is due to DESE by August 10<sup>th</sup>.**

### Part I: Contact Information, Feasibility Study Results, and Preliminary Reopening Model

District Name(s) <sup>1</sup>	<b>Reading Public Schools</b>
Superintendent Name:	John F. Doherty, Ed.D.
Superintendent Phone:	781-944-5800
Superintendent Email:	<a href="mailto:John.doherty@reading.k12.ma.us">John.doherty@reading.k12.ma.us</a>
Contact Completing Form:	John F. Doherty
Contact Phone:	781-944-5800
Contact Email:	<a href="mailto:John.doherty@reading.k12.ma.us">John.doherty@reading.k12.ma.us</a>
COVID-19 Response Leader Name, Role, Title: <i>If different than contact completing form</i>	Same as above
Response Leader Phone:	
Response Leader Email:	

1. **What were the key findings from your in-person learning feasibility study, and what does this imply for the student learning model you may use this fall? Suggested word limit: 300. \***

An in-person learning feasibility study has been on-going in the Reading Public Schools since late May and includes family and staff surveys, facilities and fire department review of all learning and cafeteria spaces within the school district, current purchasing plan for Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), cleaning equipment, and learning tools (including platforms, technology devices and hotspots), and subcommittee work in learning and teaching, supporting all students, social emotional support, human resources, transportation and operations.

This study has provided the following key findings:

- Following DESE guidelines PPE has been ordered for all staff and students and specialized PPE has been ordered for staff who may be working with high risk populations.
- Additional online curriculum and videoconferencing tools have been purchased for the upcoming school year if a remote or hybrid environment is implemented.
- Additional technology devices, including computers, hot spots, ipads, cameras and adaptive equipment have been purchased for the upcoming school year.
- A Town of Reading Facilities Department review of all learning and cafeteria spaces in the school district indicates that using the three-foot minimum separation with masks would allow most of the general classrooms in the district to have a capacity of 22 student desks and chairs (all facing the same direction in rows), 1 teacher desk, and one table. Please note that at some levels, shared tables are used in lieu of desks and the student capacity may be less. This number would vary depending on the square footage of the classroom and the age of the students, but this is based upon an average classroom size of 800 square feet. Student capacity would change depending on the size of the classroom, class layout, removal of excess furniture, built in bookcases and cabinets, and the number of adults normally in the classroom. Any furniture and materials that is needed for classroom learning would need to stay, which would lessen the capacity of the classroom. This type of physical layout would also need to satisfy fire department and building code requirements for safe egress. If a six-foot distancing requirement were used in lieu of the three-foot distancing, the capacity would decrease using the above model, to approximately 14 students for an average size classroom. Smaller learning spaces (i.e. special education learning centers, testing areas, counseling rooms) would have a much less student/adult capacity.
- Class sizes in the district vary from school to school and level to level. At the RISE Preschool, integrated classrooms have an average class size of 15 students with 3 adults in the classroom. At the elementary level, most classes are in the range 20-22, with a high end of 25 (Wood End, Grade 5) to a low end of 14 (Wood End Kindergarten). In addition, there is on average, 2 adults in an elementary classroom with some co-taught special education program classrooms having up to four adults. At the middle school level, class sizes range from 19-26 students, depending on the grade level with two adults or more in some special education inclusionary classrooms. At the high school, class sizes range from 18 to 32 depending on the course. There are on average two adults in the co-taught classrooms.
- For the three-foot in-person model, additional classrooms would be needed in each school for overflow satellite learning to mitigate the difference in student capacity. In addition, we would need to procure additional storage for the furniture that would need to be removed in each classroom to reach the student capacity described above. Other than large spaces (library, cafeteria, gymnasium, multipurpose room and auditoriums at secondary level) there are no additional classrooms districtwide available with the in-person model. Additional staffing would also be needed for those satellite rooms. Birch Meadow

Elementary School, which is scheduled to receive three modular classrooms in October, would need even more classrooms due to the current shortage of classroom space at that school.

- Because lunch will require students to remove their masks, a minimum of six feet physical distancing will be required. Having lunch in several classrooms is not a feasible option due to the amount of student supervision needed, the additional classrooms needed as students would need to be spaced out to a minimum of 6 feet rather than 3 feet, the amount of additional food service staff needed and the additional staffing needed for cleaning and disinfecting those classrooms after lunch. The cafeteria and gymnasium would be needed, along with the possible addition of lunch periods, to adequately hold lunch in a full in-person model.
- In a survey that was administered by the Reading Teachers Association in mid-July, 42% of all teachers are either extremely uncomfortable or uncomfortable about returning back to school in-person in the fall. Conversely, in a survey that was conducted to families in late July, 84% of all families would be sending their children to an in person model.

2. Which reopening model within your plan are you leaning towards for the start of the school year? Please select the **predominant model** for elementary, middle, and high school. (For example, in a plan where the majority of students are coming back in-person full time, a subset of students may continue to learn remotely if needed.) Districts can use the text box below this chart to provide further explanation of their selections, if needed. \*

	In-person	Hybrid	Remote	N/A
Elementary School	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Middle School	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
High School	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

If you would like to provide an additional explanation of the initial reopening model in question 2 above, or if there are additional factors or challenges that you would like us to understand, please write those here:

With the ever-evolving medical research that is emerging from the pandemic, it is inconclusive that three-foot distance with masks and all recommended safety precautions is adequate for adults and for students. Our feasibility study showed that we could reach the student and adult capacity of most classrooms in the district with the three-foot physical distancing. However, we would not be able to adequately address overflow spaces for classrooms with smaller capacities, larger classes (i.e. Grade 6 classes at Coolidge and Parker; Grade 5 at Wood End; some RMHS classes), and storage spaces for excess furniture. In addition, from a health, safety, and psychological perspective, we do not feel that three feet physical distancing would work for our staff at this time. This information, combined with the concerns raised by staff, causes us to believe that it would be more prudent from a health and safety perspective, to follow the CDC guidelines of 6 feet and implement a hybrid model. If we were to implement a full in-person model utilizing the 6 foot distancing, we would need to identify and rent additional classroom space out of the school district, rent storage containers or space to store excess furniture, hire additional teachers to implement the full cohort model, hire additional nurses to address the potential for increased case load due to COVID protocols, hire additional support staff and substitute teachers, and hire additional custodial staff (or contract with an outside cleaning service) for cleaning and

disinfecting. Some of these costs will also be incurred by the hybrid model, but the staffing needs will be less in the hybrid model than an in-person model.

## **Part II: Summary of Three Reopening Learning Models**

1. **In-person:** Please provide a summary of your plan for how students would return to full-time in-person learning. Please reference the “Step 2” section of this document (page 2) and provide an overview of what you believe to be the most critical information about how this model would work in your district. Suggested word limit: 400.

### **In-person learning model:**

- For this learning model, students receive in-person instruction full time in school environments that have been appropriately modified to address health and safety requirements issued by DESE.
- In this model, districts may still have a subset of students whose families have decided to continue in a remote learning model while the rest of the school returns in-person full time.
- In the description of this model, districts should include information about how student learning, scheduling, protocols, and/or facilities use may look different than in traditional in-person learning with no restrictions.

In accordance with DESE guidelines, we will strive to maximize physical distance and will strive for 6’ of distance between students. We will strictly adhere to maintaining 3’ of distance between students at all times.

### **Here is a summary of the in-person model.**

#### **RISE Preschool**

- As part of our space feasibility study, each classroom in each school has been given a student capacity based on the three-foot minimum distance. When possible we will balance classrooms to meet the student capacity. If necessary, we will need to create overflow classrooms.
- It is our intent to include both students with disabilities and role model students in our plan.
- Continuing to include music during the school day. Music may be remote or asynchronous.
- Depending on further guidance from DESE, Physical education may be held in the gymnasium or outdoors.
- Student schedules that include many designated movement breaks throughout the day, including opportunities to go outdoors and remove masks in a structured and safe way.
- Snacks and lunch will be held in the classroom, six feet apart.
- Elimination of shared furniture and supplies in classrooms will be necessary to provide for additional space between desks. This will require additional offsite storage.
- Cubbies will not be used by students. Students will bring all materials and coats to class. This may impact student capacity for a classroom.

#### **Elementary Level**

- As part of our space feasibility study, each classroom in each school has been given a student capacity based on the three-foot minimum distance. When possible we will balance class sizes to meet the student capacity. If necessary, we will need to create overflow classrooms.
- At the elementary level, it is our intent to keep students together in a cohort with a classroom teacher as much as possible. This model will assist with contact tracing.
- For overflow spaces when class sizes exceed the student capacity in a classroom, we will be utilizing spaces such as libraries, gymnasiums, cafeterias, outdoors and specialist classrooms to place additional classes.
- Continuing to include specials (art, music, physical education, and library classes) in students’ school days.
- Hosting specials (i.e. art, music, library) in the students’ classrooms to minimize student movement through the buildings.

- Elimination of shared furniture and supplies in classrooms will be necessary to provide for additional space between desks. This will require additional offsite storage.
- Student schedules that include many designated movement breaks throughout the day, including opportunities to go outdoors and remove masks in a structured and safe way.
- Lunch will be held in the cafeteria and gymnasium to maintain 6-foot distancing without masks. If additional spaces are needed, we will use outdoors or classrooms. Lunch arrival will be staggered to maintain proper distancing.
- Lockers and cubbies will not be used by students. Students will bring all materials and coats to class. This may impact student capacity for a classroom.

### **Middle School Level**

- As part of our space feasibility study, each classroom in each school has been given a student capacity based on the three-foot minimum distance. When possible we will balance class sizes to meet the student capacity. If necessary, we will need to create overflow classrooms.
- Students grouped by team, who receive most instruction and lunch in that single cohort. At the middle school level, it is our intent to keep students together in a cohort with a group of classroom teachers as much as possible. This model will assist with contact tracing.
- When students need to move between classrooms, there will be staggered hallway passing times to limit the amount of cross contact with students from other cohorts. Where possible, traffic will be unidirectional.
- Elimination of shared furniture and supplies in classrooms will be necessary to provide for additional space between desks. This will require additional offsite storage.
- Middle school art and music classes will be held in the classrooms. Depending on further guidance from DESE, Physical education/Wellness classes will be held in the gymnasium when lunch is not in session, the multipurpose room, individual classrooms and/or outdoors.
- Depending on further guidance from DESE, Band and chorus classes will be held either outdoors, in the cafeteria, or auditorium.
- Lunch will be held in the cafeteria, gymnasium, and outdoors. Lunch arrival will be staggered to maintain proper distancing.
- Student schedules will include many designated movement breaks throughout the day, including opportunities to go outdoors and remove masks in a structured and safe way.
- Lockers will not be used for either physical education or for general use. Students will bring all books and coats to class. This may impact student capacity for a classroom.

### **High School Level**

- As part of our space feasibility study, each classroom in each school has been given a student capacity based on the three-foot minimum distance. When possible we will balance class sizes to meet the student capacity. If necessary, we will need to create overflow classrooms.
- To reduce number of passing times, a block schedule will be implemented.
- When students need to move between classrooms, there will be staggered hallway passing times to limit the amount of cross contact with students from other cohorts. Where possible, traffic will be unidirectional.
- Depending on further guidance from DESE, band and chorus classes will be held either outdoors or in the auditorium.
- Depending on further guidance from DESE, Physical education/Wellness classes will be held in the gymnasium when lunch is not in session, the multipurpose room, individual classrooms and/or outdoors.
- Elimination of furniture and supplies in classrooms will be necessary to provide for additional space between desks. This will require additional offsite storage.
- Lunch will be held in the cafeteria, field house, and outdoors. Lunch arrival will be staggered to maintain proper distancing.

- Student schedules will include many designated movement breaks throughout the day, including opportunities to go outdoors and remove masks in a structured and safe way.
- Lockers will not be used. Students will carry everything to class. This may impact student capacity for a classroom.
- For this model, we may need to review supervised entrances to each school, staggered arrival and dismissal times for bus students and other students with specific congregating areas that follow six-foot distancing.
  - o **Will any of your students be learning fully remotely? Yes**
  - o **Anticipated percent of students learning remotely: 8% or about 325 students. This is based on survey data that was administered the week of 7/19/2020.**

**2. Hybrid: Please provide a summary of your plan for how students would return to school through a hybrid learning model. Please reference the “Step 2” section of this document (page 2) and provide an overview of what you believe to be the most critical information about how this model would work in your district. Suggested word limit: 400.**

**Hybrid learning model:**

- In a hybrid model, students alternate between in-person learning with safety requirements and remote learning.
- Districts should include information about how student learning will change across the two learning environments (in-person and remote) and provide sample schedules showing how students will rotate between in-person and remote learning models, including whether this varies among student groups and/or grade levels.
- In a hybrid model, some High Needs students may still participate in full-time in-person instruction to ensure effective accommodations, and some families may still decide to keep their children learning remotely full time.

**Students who should stay in-person full time with a hybrid model**

As described in the DESE guidance on the Fall, 2020 Special Education Services, the following students should remain in-person as much as possible during both hybrid and remote learning:

- Preschool age students with disabilities and role model students.
- Students with significant and complex needs
  - o Students already identified as “high needs” through the IEP process on the IEP form entitled “Primary Disability/Level of Need-PL3.” **Such students must meet at least two of these criteria:**
    - Services provided outside of the general education classroom;
    - Service providers are special education teachers and related service providers;
    - Special education services constitute more than 75% of the student’s school day;
- Students who cannot engage in remote learning due to their disability-related needs;
- Students who primarily use aided and augmentative communication;
- Students who are homeless
- Students in foster care or congregate care; and/or
- Students dually identified as English Learners.

**What hybrid learning will look like:**

- Across the district, we will follow an “A Week / B Week” hybrid model based on predetermined class assignments. Students will be assigned to the “A Cohort” or “B Cohort” by the building principals.
- Students will attend school during their assigned cohort week, for four full days (Monday-Thursday).
- Friday will be a half day remote learning day for all students, regardless of the cohort. This day will be used for remote learning, additional cleaning in the schools, extra services for high needs students, planning and training for staff and meetings. Specialists (Art, Music, PE, Health, Library, Computer) will post asynchronous lessons every Friday for different groups of students (to be assigned by Principal). Other than Fridays, specialists will not

teach remote and will be used as an additional teacher in satellite rooms. The specialists will be teaching live when cohorts are in school.

- Most classroom teachers at the elementary and middle school level will be following a similar model where they will teach their cohort in-person one week and remote the alternate week. High School classroom teachers may have a different setup depending on the courses that they teach. All special education teachers, related service providers, and paraeducators at all levels will be in-person both weeks to deliver the services on a child's IEP, teach in person classes and provide support for satellite classes. Specialists will also be in person both weeks to teach in person classes and work with the classroom teacher in satellite classes. This setup enhances opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration between classroom teachers and specialists.
  - When students are in-person, classes will be divided evenly and a satellite classroom will be created with another adult in that classroom. Where possible the classrooms will be adjacent to each other. The primary classroom teacher will be in one room broadcasting his/her class into the other room with a video camera and videoconferencing tool (i.e. Zoom or Teams). Students in each classroom will be six feet apart with appropriate safety and health regulations followed. The teacher may go between rooms to facilitate instruction.
  - When students are in their remote learning week, they will be instructed remotely by their classroom teacher(s) with a combination of synchronous and asynchronous lessons. Students will have a specific schedule each day with teachers.
  - Each level will handle the classroom assignments a little differently:
    - Preschool-We will explore, due to lower class sizes, if all preschool classes can meet in-person both weeks.
    - Kindergarten-There will be specific differentiation in time and standards taught between full day kindergarten and half day kindergarten.
    - Elementary-Each grade level will have at least one class in each cohort, to allow families at the elementary level to be able to be on the same or different weeks.
    - Middle School-One team per grade level will be in each cohort.
    - High School-Grades 9 and 10 will be in one cohort and Grades 11 and 12 will be in the other cohort.
  - The model above will allow for greater physical distancing and smaller in-person class sizes in each classroom.
  - This model provides the opportunity to meet with students in-person to set goals and expectations for remote learning time, to provide supplies for remote learning, and to check in with students on concepts covered and tasks completed during remote learning.
  - In the event of a suspected outbreak, 10 days of at-home learning will allow for symptoms of COVID-19 to surface prior to a return to in-person learning.
  - Lunch will be held only outdoors, in the gymnasium and cafeteria for proper six-foot distancing without masks. Lunch arrival will be staggered to maintain proper distancing.
  - Based on DESE Guidance, Band and Chorus at the middle and high school will be held in the cafeteria, multipurpose room, outside or the auditorium. Band and chorus rooms will be repurposed for additional classroom satellite space.
  - Depending on further guidance from DESE, Physical education/Wellness classes will be held in the gymnasium when lunch is not in session, the multipurpose room, individual classrooms and/or outdoors.
  - Library may be repurposed for additional classroom space.
  - For this model, we may need to review supervised entrances to each school, staggered arrival and dismissal times for bus students and other students with specific congregating areas that follow six-foot distancing.
- 3. Remote: Please provide a summary of your plan for remote learning as the default model of instruction for all students. Please reference the "Step 2" section of this document (page 2) and provide an overview of what you believe to be the most critical information about how this model would work in your district. Suggested word limit: 400.**



In this learning model, remote learning is the default mode of instruction for all students, though some High Needs students may still be served in-person full time or through a hybrid model (see above). Structured Learning Time requirements apply to remote learning.

Remote learning must include the following requirements per DESE regulations:

- (1) procedures for all students to participate in remote learning, including a system for tracking attendance and participation;
- (2) alignment of remote academic work to state standards;
- (3) a policy for issuing grades for students' remote academic work; and
- (4) a method for teachers and administrators to regularly communicate with students' parents and guardians, including providing interpretation and translation services to limited English proficient parents and guardians.

Districts should also include information about the technology platforms, staffing model, curriculum, and instructional materials they will employ.

### **What remote learning looks like at all levels**

In the event that students who return to in-person school need to shift to fully remote learning, we are prepared to ensure that teachers and staff are prepared to support students in a fully-remote setting.

Remote learning for all students in the event of school closure will include the following at all levels:

- Weekly structured schedules with a combination of daily synchronous lessons, asynchronous work, and offline work.
- Attendance in remote learning will be mandatory, similar to an in-person school setting.
- Students will be assessed and graded.
- Expectations will be created for online engagement for students, including expectations surrounding use of cameras and microphones, contributing to class discussions, and grading/feedback expectations related to engagement in lessons.
- Protocols for reporting and resolving technology failures and acquiring necessary educational materials to support learning.
- Expectations for services for English Learners and Students with IEPs to receive their services will be established and implemented.
- The remote school day will follow a typical school day (depending on the student's grade level) of remote work. This work will include direct instruction in the major disciplines (math, science, ELA, social studies, world language) as well as opportunities for specialties (art, drama, music, library, and other electives). There will also be opportunities for students to connect with teachers through office hours or other small group settings.
- Daily Remote learning will look like:
  - "Synchronous" lessons, meaning students will have direct access to a live teacher via lessons in Google Classroom. We will be using Zoom and Microsoft Teams for videoconferencing.
    - Students may stop interacting with the teacher during this time to complete a problem or assignment, but the teacher will be supervising student learning during this time.
  - "Asynchronous" work meaning the student's learning will be guided independently or with the aid of a parent or other caregiver. This includes time completing homework or projects or receiving additional services.
- To help facilitate our online learning, we have purchased a significant amount of technology and curriculum tools that will help support staff and students during the upcoming school year. Some of the platform and tools are:
  - Video conferencing tools such as Microsoft Teams and Zoom

- Replacement laptops
- Additional devices for families that need additional technology support for remote learning
- Wireless Hotspots for families that do not have internet access
- Online Curriculum Resources such as National Geographic Curriculum Tools and Envision Math Tools purchased at middle school and high school level
- Assessment Tools such as Edulastic and Lexia Intervention and Early Literacy Screening Tool
- Other online tools that support remote work and systems

**4. High needs students: Please provide a summary of how students with disabilities, English learners (ELs), former EL students, and Economically Disadvantaged students will be supported within each of the three reopening models. Suggested word limit: 400.**

As part of our three plans, we will be addressing the foundation needs of all students, in particular our students with disabilities, ELs, former EL students, and Economically Disadvantaged students. We have purchased additional laptops and wireless hot spots for those students who have technology needs. Our schools will be reaching out on a regular basis to check in on our most vulnerable populations.

It is our intent to keep our most vulnerable students in-person as much as possible, including during remote time, unless we are not allowed to for health reasons. During hybrid learning, Fridays will be scheduled to provide extra help, checking in, additional counseling and tutorial services for those students. We are anticipating the following students will stay in-person as much as possible.

- Preschool age students with disabilities and role model students.
- Students with significant and complex needs
  - Students already identified as “high needs” through the IEP process on the IEP form entitled “Primary Disability/Level of Need-PL3.” ***Such students must meet at least two of these criteria:***
    - Services provided outside of the general education classroom;
    - Service providers are special education teachers and related service providers;
    - Special education services constitute more than 75% of the student’s school day;
- Students who cannot engage in remote learning due to their disability-related needs;
- Students who primarily use aided and augmentative communication;
- Students who are homeless
- Students in foster care or congregate care; and/or
- Students dually identified as English Learners.

**Assistance and Questions about Plan Submissions**

Should you have any questions about the plan submission process or the online form, please contact [reopeningk12@mass.gov](mailto:reopeningk12@mass.gov). If you need technical assistance with the online form (e.g., issues with technology or functionality), please contact [research@doe.mass.edu](mailto:research@doe.mass.edu).