



GATEWAY REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

BLANDFORD · CHESTER · HUNTINGTON · MIDDLEFIELD · MONTGOMERY · RUSSELL
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Two-Step Process for District Fall Reopening Plans

First Plan: Submitted to DESE July 31, 2020

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.

Using the DESE safety recommendations of 3' social distancing, we can only bring all students back to school in-person if the following conditions can be met:

1. That the 20% of families from our initial parent survey that say they will do complete remote learning actually keep their children home,
2. That **all** of our staff are able to physically teach in the classroom,
3. That for MS/HS the additional lunch schedules can be added within the schedule and not impact the DESE hour requirements,
4. That we can actually transport enough students to school (according to DESE guidance, we cannot transport the required number of students to school given the reduction of passenger capacity by nearly 70%, as well as the time it takes to complete each tier (we have many bus runs that are an hour-long, which will be longer when we add in the necessary cleaning between runs),
5. That we can reach an agreement with the various associations to return including needed changes in scheduling, physical distancing, safety measures, etc,
6. That we can modify cohorts and classes at the high school level to minimize transitions but still allow them to happen while effectively cleaning between groups,
7. That we can effectively clean and sanitize buildings, restrooms, common areas, and classroom materials on a regular basis.

Under a 6' social distancing, we cannot bring all students back to school in an 'in-person' model but this would allow for a hybrid model where PreK-1 grades and students with high needs are back every day schools are in session and grades 2-12 are in school on an alternate schedule based upon which town a student lives in. Again this is based upon the following conditions:

1. That the 20% of families from our initial parent survey that say they will do complete remote learning actually do,
2. That the majority of our staff are able to physically teach in the classroom,
3. That for MS/HS the additional lunch schedules can be added within the schedule and not impact the 990-hour requirement,

4. That we can actually transport enough students to school (according to DESE guidance, we may not be able to transport the required number of students to school (the cohort A and B groups along with high needs and K1) given the reduction of passenger capacity by nearly 70%, as well as the time it takes to complete each tier (we have many bus runs that are an hour-long time, which will be longer when we add in the necessary cleaning between runs),
5. That we can reach an agreement with the various associations to return including needed changes in scheduling,
6. That we can modify cohorts and classes at the high school level to minimize transitions but still allow them to happen while effectively cleaning between groups,
7. That we can effectively clean and sanitize buildings, restrooms, common areas, and classroom materials on a regular basis.

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.

Reopening Learning Models

Grade Span Reopening Learning Models

	In-person	Hybrid	Remote
Elementary		X	X
Middle School		X	X
High School		X	X

¹ For collaborative and superintendency union leaders submitting for more than one district, please list all districts.

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 know, please write those here:

Based upon our findings in the three working groups (District, Elementary, and Secondary) in reviewing the three models, the agreed upon conclusion is that Gateway needs to come back in a “Phased Hybrid Model” until social distancing is no longer required. This model would entail a phased reopening plan whereby we would offer two options to our families. One option would be to keep their children home and complete all of their education as remote learners, the second option is to return their children to schools as the district can meet the safety requirements as established in conjunction with our local boards of health.

The district would physically bring back a limited number of students into the school based upon a set of criteria (final parameters under development) that would be based upon bringing students back in a planned sequence. Under this plan, students would return either on a two-day or four-day per week schedule depending on what individual students need and our ability to bring students back safely (i.e., at 6-foot social distancing, with appropriate staff physically able to be in the building, safely transporting students, etc.). The schools would be physically open for students four days per week (Monday, Tuesday and Thursday, Friday). Wednesdays would be total remote learning for all students with teachers and paraprofessionals using this time to touch base with students regarding their work and remote learning, preparation of lessons, professional development, group planning, and other related staffing and student needs as well the cleaning of the schools between groups of students.

The first group to return would be students with higher needs (this may include students with disabilities, ELL students, and economically disadvantaged students) based upon their prior success this spring with remote learning, their social/emotional status, the severity of their needs, and other considerations developed by the elementary and secondary working groups in consultation with our pupil services director.

The second group to physically return would be students in PreK-first grade. These students may return on a two-day, or four-day a week schedule based upon our ability to bring students back safely under our restrictions of transportation and physically staffing the building. If we need to alternate cohorts, this would be done by town of residence which would allow members in the same household to attend on the same days.

The third group to physically return would be the remainder of the elementary grades (second through sixth). They would initially return under an alternating day, hybrid schedule as outlined above.

The fourth group to physically return would be the middle school (grades seven and eight). They would also return under the alternating day, hybrid schedule.

The last group to physically return would be the high school students. These students would return

under an alternating day, hybrid schedule as outlined above.

Students who are not physically in school during these phases would be operating under a remote model of instruction. To ensure that this meets DESE requirements for remote learning, the district is purchasing hotspots for those students who have experienced difficulty in getting internet access, is providing a more robust platform for teachers to use in working with students, is holding classes as 'scheduled' during the day rather than as students can drop in (thereby allowing for attendance to be taken, group work to be utilized, a chance to grade both participation and work, and more robust student and staff interactions), is increasing the ability of staff to contact students without using their personal phone number, is providing an increased ability for staff to record lessons, and will be providing time for staff to work with students individually if they, or their family, are having difficulties under remote learning.

The transitions between these groups physically returning to school will be based upon specific criteria being met rather than on any set dates, much as the state's reopening plan is based upon specific criteria. As with the state's plan, the district may have to move back and forth between levels based upon the conditions as established.

Once the restriction on social distancing is lifted, the district would physically return all students to school and reinstate extracurricular activities.

There are multiple challenges:

- The need to have sufficient custodians to clean areas on a regular basis under CDC guidelines,
- The need to have high school groups move between classrooms due to the specific needs of certain classes (i.e., art, music, labs, PE),
- Addressing equity issues between staff members who may have to deal with different cohorts or who have to travel between different classrooms on a mobile cart to teach,
- In transporting students in a large rural district where buses travel over 1,500 miles a day and where many bus runs are almost an hour long,
- In accommodating teachers who may, due to underlying medical or other issues, be unable to return to work physically.

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.

Due to the constraints of staffing and transportation, full-time, in-person learning is not deemed feasible or even possible. We already have teachers that have indicated that due to underlying

conditions they cannot return to physically interacting with children, we know that the association is not comfortable with a 3' social distancing spacing, and due to the length of our bus runs (over 1,500 miles per day) and the need for sanitizing busses between runs, we cannot add an additional tier, or more, for the elementary and secondary runs. Our bus company has also indicated that they will not be able to double or triple the number of runs in our current two-tier system, and the district would not be able to afford to double our transportation costs.

If we were to overcome the staffing, transportation, and negotiation issues, we would need to add additional lunch sections for the middle and high school, change the daily schedule to allow for some transitions for middle and high school students while keeping them in cohorts as much as possible. With approximately 20% of our students opting to attend 'remotely' we would also have to 'flip' our instruction so that all students have the basic lesson/information to work with and then determine how teachers would interact with the remote learners (potential issues with work hours, preparation time, live streaming and other items that would need to be agreed to by staff associations). Elementary students would essentially remain in their classrooms except that we'd have to find a way to increase distancing for lunches, snacks, and 'mask breaks'.

- Will any of your students be learning fully remotely? **Yes/No** ○

Anticipated percent of students learning remotely **20%**

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.

Under a 'Phased Hybrid' model, students would fall into several groups. Those groups would return to school-based upon safety (transportation, staffing, cleaning, etc.) on a specific schedule based upon health and safety parameters rather than specific dates. Based upon identified need, certain students would attend four days a week while all other students would attend either Monday/Tuesday, or Thursday/Friday depending upon their town of residency. Wednesdays would be designated a 'remote learning day' for all students allowing for the buildings to be cleaned, teachers to have common planning time as well as time for PD around remote learning, and to touch base with those students who are in a fully remote learning situation. The number of students in the building under this model would allow for a 6' social distancing situation, decrease the need for elementary school children to move for lunch and mask breaks, decrease the number of additional lunch waves in the Middle/High school and potentially allow for some classes to use specialty rooms or equipment (physical labs to occur in science classrooms, PE to use gyms or outside fields, art to use art rooms and performing arts to use chorus and band areas once allowed under DESE guidelines). Also, families have the ability to have their children be completely 'remote'

learners during this pandemic period.

To make this work, the district would need to implement several additional items. These include, at a minimum:

- Providing additional professional development to staff members in remote learning and the Google platform (including moving to Google Enterprise for Education),
- Ensuring every student has access to internet by providing hotspots to those students who have indicated they don't have reliable internet service (~57 students),
- Providing an opportunity for parents to receive training/tutoring on assisting their children with online learning,
- Providing a simpler way to access several different teachers (dashboard or single sign-on for grade level or related courses) for course work,
- Creating grade-level curriculum/instructional teams to ensure content is aligned and material is covered equitably across subjects,
- Ensuring an accurate means is developed for measuring participation/attendance,
- Enhancing our ability to provide grades/credit for work done and courses completed,
- Ensuring our transportation system can safely bring the required number of students to schools from the cohorts,
- Continuing two-way dialogue with families.

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.

Remote learning would be part of our return to school plan as we begin a phased, physical return to school for all students, even those who are brought physically back first (due to the Wednesdays the buildings are closed to students) and due to the need to 'flip' instruction so that teachers only have to create one lesson and work with all students at the same time. To effectively implement a more robust remote learning experience, we would build upon the lessons learned this spring and this includes looking at three options - one option would be that we physically bring back students in a phased plan to receive in-person instruction while others participate remotely, two, all students would receive all instruction and services remotely if the incidence of COVID-19 increases in the area, and three, working with those families who have opted to remain under the 'remote' learning umbrella even if the schools are open for physical attendance. Under all options, the following would need to occur:

- Providing additional professional development to staff members in remote learning and the Google platform (including moving to Google Enterprise for Education),
- Ensuring every student has access to internet by providing hotspots to those students who

have indicated they don't have reliable internet service (~60 students),

- Providing an opportunity for parents to receive training/tutoring on assisting their children with online learning
- Providing a simpler way to access several different teachers (dashboard or single sign-on for grade level or related courses) for course work
- Creating grade-level curriculum/instructional teams to ensure content is aligned and material is covered equitably across subjects
- Ensuring that an accurate means is developed for measuring participation/attendance
- Enhancing our ability to provide grades/credit for work done and courses completed
- Continuing two-way dialogue with families

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.

All students with disabilities with IEPs that call for moderate to intensive needs and who receive specialized instruction from multiple providers, will be on-site for each available day at all grade levels. Using the guidelines published by DESE for both Extended Year Services and Fall re-opening, the district has given careful consideration to students with low to moderate needs as well as which students have successfully benefitted from remote learning to-date. These students will participate in the hybrid learning plan as described above. Finally, there is a small population of "low need" students across the district, who receive single source specialized instruction and have successfully participated in remote learning to date. If necessary, these students may easily transition to a fully remote program for the Fall.

Regarding EL's, those students with a WIDA score of 4.5 or below, as well as ELs who live in non-English speaking homes will be on-site four days per week. ELs with WIDA scores above 4.5 and recent ACCESS scores above the "at-risk" category and have demonstrated successful participation with remote learning will be programmed under the hybrid model. Additionally, the district has several students who have tested out of EL status who have successfully participated in remote learning to date; these students will follow the hybrid guidelines for the Fall.

Economically Disadvantaged-Principals and school staff would identify those students in this category that had difficulty in succeeding under a fully-remote educational situation, or might be considered high need, and offer parents the opportunity to have them participate in a two or four day, in-person experience at the schools.