



**WINTHROP PUBLIC SCHOOLS
REOPENING PLAN 2020-2021**

**PRESENTED TO THE WINTHROP SCHOOL
COMMITTEE AUGUST 3, 2020**



Considerations and Recommendations

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education required all schools to prepare a reopening plan that addresses three possible models of learning for this fall:

1. Full In-person Learning Model (with new safety requirements)
2. Hybrid Learning Model (combination of in-person and remote learning)
3. Full Remote Learning Model (students learning from home)

These are also the models the Return to School Task Force considered for our return in the fall of 2020.

Full In-person Learning Model

This model would return 100% of students and staff to the WPS, inclusive of all of the new safety requirements outlined by the Department of Education. Although our schools can physically accommodate all students back into classrooms using the minimum 3-foot distancing guidelines and if **all** students PreK-12 wear masks, there are factors and impacts that do not support this plan. A significant number of administrators, the Board of Health, staff and parents have voiced concerns that these distancing measures are less than ideal. This concern, coupled with the number of challenges that come with managing large numbers of students in such a restricted environment, the significant loss of structured learning time due to student management during entrance and dismissal, mealtimes, and passing has caused us to take a more cautious and deliberate approach to reopening our schools.

HYBRID LEARNING MODEL

School districts throughout the Commonwealth are considering different schedules for hybrid learning. In the hybrid model, cohorts of students alternate between in-person and remote learning and they are grouped into smaller cohorts attending school (1) on a week on/week off schedule (2) for 2-3 days per week in person and learning remotely on the days they are not in school or (3) half day/half day where students split the day. While there are pros and cons to each of these options, **option 2** would best fit the needs of our students in terms of our ability to follow the safety and cleaning protocols necessary to open schools. In option 2, students in grades PreK-12 attend school 2 days per week and learn remotely for the remaining three days. Identified High Needs student groups would attend 4 days per week. All students will be divided into either Cohort Blue or Cohort Gold. We will prioritize placing families in the same cohort on the same schedule unless otherwise requested.

Full Remote Learning Model

Our Remote learning plan will include the following requirements per DESE regulations: (1) Specific school based procedures, listed in the individual school plans, for all students to participate in remote learning, Use of our Ipass system, Google Documents, Schoology and the multitude of online platforms used at each grade level for tracking attendance and participation; (2) Continuous use of professional development time for educators to assure that academics are aligned to the state standards and that student assessment is informing instruction; (3) Grades and or Standards based reports will be completed for all students' remote academic work; and (4) each building will have their own coordinated plans for teachers and administrators to regularly communicate with students' parents and guardians.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oHiEThCMROc>

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that we start the 2020-2021 school year in a **Hybrid Model** to allow a “phased in” approach to returning all students and staff back to school in the safest manner. If the metrics in the state and Winthrop remain positive and medical science and future guidance supports it, I recommend that the School Committee re-evaluate the viability of returning all students to in-person learning on a schedule to be determined by the Committee and the Superintendent.

There will be an option for families to “Opt Out” of this recommended plan and select a full remote model. Families who select to “opt out” will be given the opportunity to participate in an online program offered by DESE, at the district’s expense, that will be monitored by WPS staff. The district is currently waiting for details from the DESE regarding the process to enroll and the parameters of the program. Information will be provided to families as soon as it becomes available.

What Evidence did the District Use to Make This Decision?

- The results of our ability to apply all of the DESE guidance related to Facilities and Operations, Health and Safety and Student Learning. The Department of Education developed its reopening approach after a “thorough review of current medical literature” and “discussion with many stakeholders including infectious disease physicians, pediatricians, and other public health experts” from the Massachusetts General Brigham Health System, the Massachusetts COVID-19 Command Center’s Medical Advisory Board, and the Massachusetts Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics.
- Consideration of the [American Academy of Pediatrics](#) and DESE recommendation that “all policy considerations for the coming school year should start with a goal of having students physically present at school.”

What Evidence did the District Use to Make This Decision...?

- Consistent review of the Massachusetts DPH COVID-19 Dashboard which indicates a number of metrics related to COVID-19
<https://www.mass.gov/doc/covid-19-dashboard-july-31-2020/download>, Daily review of COVID-19 confirmed cases in the Town of Winthrop, weekly review of the John Hopkins University published COVID-19 testing trends in each state.
- Review of Remote Learning Survey (June 2020), Return to School Family Survey (July 2020) Staff Survey (July 2020)
- Review of all of the data and planning documents related to the evaluations and recommendations of the Return to School Task Force and task force subcommittees.
- Review of multiple communications (emails, website communication tab) from families and community members.

How will Hybrid learning work...?

There are 2 aspects of the Hybrid Model

In-Person Days: 50% of the student population attends school in person on two consecutive days of the week.

Remote Days: 50% of the student population works remotely 3 days per week

There will also be an option to "OPT OUT" of the Hybrid Plan altogether and take advantage of a fully remote plan provided by the state.

How will the Hybrid Model Work...?

- All students will be divided into two cohorts (Cohort Blue and Cohort Gold). We will make every effort to keep siblings together.
- Schedule: cohorts will be scheduled for in person school on Monday/Tuesday or Thursday /Friday with Wednesday being a remote learning day for all students.
- Half of the school student population attends school at one time (Cohort Blue or Cohort Gold) to maintain classroom social distancing of 6 feet.
- Remote Learning will be structured and will follow the school schedule. Teachers will provide instruction using a combination of the flipped classroom, zoom lessons or live streaming of classroom instruction in real time. In addition, students will be expected to work independently on assignments.

How will the Hybrid Model Work...?

- Every student will have access to a device. Families will not be expected to share devices between siblings and the district will be offering borrowed devices to those who request them. The district will provide more information on the process of borrowing technology prior to the start of the school year.
- Substantially separate special education programs and other identified high needs groups of students, will operate 4 days per week with Wednesday being a remote learning day. Specialized services may be provided on Wednesday as deemed necessary and appropriate. Special education staff will contact parents directly to arrange for Wednesday services if deemed necessary

How long will this Hybrid last?

If the metrics in the state and Winthrop remain positive and medical science and future guidance supports it, we will re-evaluate the viability of returning all students to in-person school. The first re-evaluation date will be Friday, November 13, 2020.

What is the First Day of School for Students

September 16, 2020 ½ orientation sessions for each cohort. Blue will be AM and Gold will be PM. High needs students will attend full day.

September 17, 2020 ½ orientation sessions for each cohort. Blue will be AM and Gold will be PM. High needs students will attend full day.

September 18, 2020 ½ orientation sessions for each cohort. Blue will be AM and Gold will be PM. High needs students will attend full day.

September 21, 2020 Students will begin the Hybrid model schedule:

Blue: M/T in-person, W/Th/F remote Gold: Th/F in-person, M/T/W remote

Final Reopening of Schools Plan

Upon the decision of the School Committee, a final Reopening of Schools Plan will be provided to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and the community. This plan will have an in-depth outline of all aspect of teaching and learning in the hybrid model, facilities and operations, health and safety protocols and procedures and COVID-19 protocols.