![Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education]

Two-Step Process for District Fall Reopening Plans
July 15, 2020

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.

In this document, we provide an overview of the two-step process for district reopening plan submissions and the online form for preliminary plan summaries due July 31.

Overview of Two-Step Process for District Reopening Plan Submissions

Districts will submit their reopening plans to DESE through a two-step process:

- **Step 1: By July 31**, districts must complete and submit a *preliminary reopening plan summary* to DESE. Districts will fill out an **online form** that consists of two parts, which are outlined below and detailed later in this document. This form will allow DESE to collect key summary information about districts' reopening models and other planning considerations.

- **Step 2: By August 10**, districts must finalize their *comprehensive plan documents*, submit them to DESE, and release them publicly to their communities. This additional time will provide districts with an opportunity to incorporate any desired changes based on additional guidance DESE may release later in July, such as guidance on transportation and athletics. We strongly recommend that you work with your school committee (or equivalent board) on policy questions relevant to the final plan before submission.

Step 1: Preliminary Reopening Plan Summary due by July 31

This section provides an overview of the plan summary that districts will complete through the online form due by July 31. Please click here to access the form online.

The 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 the district's preliminary thinking about which of the three reopening models it may use to open the school year this fall.

- **Part II** asks the district 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 as defined here.

As districts prepare for step two of this process – finalizing their comprehensive reopening plans – please note that plans should be written in a parent-friendly format, translated into the primary languages of students' homes, and posted on the district website. All plans must be posted by August 10. Each district should include the following information in its final comprehensive reopening plan.

A.   **Executive summary**

B.   **Letter from the superintendent** to the community, including the district's selection for the reopening model it will use to begin the school year.

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

D.   **Hybrid learning model:**
- In a hybrid model, students alternate between in-person learning with safety requirements and remote learning.
- Districts should include information about <u>how student learning will change across the two learning environments (in-person and remote) and provide sample schedules</u> 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, <u>some High Needs students may still participate in full-time in-person instruction</u> to ensure effective accommodations, and <u>some families may still decide to keep their children learning remotely full time</u>.

E.   **Remote learning model:**
- In this learning model, <u>remote learning is the default mode of instruction for all students</u>, though <u>some High Needs students may still be served in-person</u> full time or through a hybrid model. Structured Learning Time requirements apply to remote learning.
- Remote learning must include the following requirements per DESE regulations: (1) <u>procedures for all students to participate in remote learning, including a system for tracking attendance and participation</u>; (2) alignment of remote academic work <u>to state standards</u>; (3) a policy for <u>issuing grades</u> for students' remote academic work; and (4) a method for teachers and administrators to <u>regularly communicate with students' parents and guardians</u>, including providing interpretation and translation services to limited English proficient parents and guardians.
- Districts should also include information about the <u>technology platforms, staffing model, curriculum, and instructional materials</u> they will employ.

F.   **Out-of-school time plan**: In this section, please include any information about additional supports, instruction, or services the district will provide to students: (a) before and after school, (b) through 21st Century Learning, if applicable, and (c) on the weekends.

G.   **Student supports and professional learning:** Please include the following information in this section: (a) safety, wellness, and social emotional supports, (b) planning and instruction, (c) assessment, and (d) intervention. (e) A school calendar with start date and PD days prior to opening is recommended.

H.   **Other**: Information in this section should be determined by the context of the district.

I.   **Certification of health and safety requirements:** Districts will need to certify that they meet the final health and safety requirements issued by DESE. A preliminary list of these requirements appears in DESE's initial fall reopening guidance; DESE will release a final list later this month.

Overview of Online Form for Preliminary District Plan Summary due July 31

Please click here to access the online form to submit your preliminary district plan summary. **The overview below is provided for informational purposes only and should not be used to submit a plan summary.**

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

District Name(s)[1]	
Superintendent Name:	
Superintendent Phone:	
Superintendent Email:	
Contact Completing Form:	
Contact Phone:	
Contact Email:	
COVID-19 Response Leader Name, Role, Title: *If different than contact completing form*	
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.

   [   ]

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			
Middle School			
High School			

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[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:

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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.

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   o   Will any of your students be learning fully remotely? Yes/No
   o   Anticipated percent of students learning remotely ____%

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.

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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.

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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.

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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. If you need technical assistance with the online form (e.g., issues with technology or functionality), please contact research@doe.mass.edu.