



Berkley Public Schools Comprehensive Reopening Plan August, 2020

Summary:

The Berkley Public School District is committed to providing a high quality education for all of its students. This plan outlines the three learning models that could occur during the 2020-2021 school year; full time in person learning, a hybrid model that blends in person and remote learning and a fully remote model of learning. No doubt all of us long for a return to schooling as we knew it before the COVID 19 outbreak, it is essential that the health and safety of our students, their families, and our staff be the guiding principle that we follow in providing education to the youngsters of the Berkley Public Schools. To that end, we have prepared three plans, the details of which will be outlined below. Each of these plans has advantages and disadvantages, and the administration, faculty and staff of the Berkley Public Schools is prepared to implement whichever of the plans is most appropriate given the circumstances occurring at any given time during this school year. **At present, the Berkley Public Schools is preparing to open the 2020-2021 school year in a Hybrid Learning Model.** As we prepare for the 2020-2021 school year, please be assured that the Berkley Public Schools will do everything possible to provide the high quality educational experiences for children that is our hallmark while keeping the children and the adults in their lives safe and healthy.

Letter from the Superintendent of Schools, Thomas J. Lynch

August 4, 2020

Dear Parents,

I am writing with an update on our planning process for the start of a new school year in the Berkley Public Schools. We are scheduled to resume student learning on September 14, 2020.

Our planning process continues to be guided by a vigilant monitoring of public health data in Massachusetts, and we are encouraged that indicators about the virus continue to move in the right direction. The Commonwealth's careful and disciplined approach has enabled our state gradually to begin reopening, in part because of strong compliance with health and safety precautions. The question now on all of our minds is how and when we apply those lessons learned to begin safely reopening our public schools.

As you may have heard, the Massachusetts Department of Elementary & Secondary Education (DESE) has directed districts to submit by July 31, 2020 a preliminary plan that addresses the feasibility of three options for serving students at the start of the school year. The options include full return to daily in-person attendance, a hybrid plan combining in-school learning with some remote learning and finally a 100% remote learning program. Each district's final plan,

approved by the School Committee, is due to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education by August 10th.

We know that under normal circumstances, students would be best served in schools every day, interacting with their peers and engaged in live classroom learning. While our educators and families worked incredibly hard last spring to implement remote learning, we know that approach presented enormous challenges and is not an adequate substitute for in-person interaction with teachers. When out of school, our students also lack access to all of the academic, mental, and physical supports that help ensure their social-emotional well-being, particularly in navigating the effects of trauma during these tremendously challenging times. Therefore, we believe our families and students deserve more than a fully remote learning plan.

In order to adhere to the school re-opening guidance provided by DESE, consistent with recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the American Pediatric Association, we also do not believe we can safely meet physical spacing distancing requirements with all students and staff in the buildings at the same time. **However, we do believe we can make significant changes in our school schedules and operating procedures to make a partial return to in-person learning both safe and successful.** This approach will require strategies to ensure physical distancing, as well as a series of other critical health and safety measures, including wearing face coverings, washing hands frequently, cleaning and sanitizing facilities, screening regularly for symptoms of illness, and staying home from school when sick, among others. Our planning process includes a comprehensive set of strategies and investments to minimize the risk of transmitting the virus.

We will be bringing students back into school buildings for in-person instruction in smaller, socially distanced groups on a rotating basis, combined with a robust remote learning program on the days students are not scheduled to physically be in school.

The Berkley School Committee voted to institute a hybrid-learning model for the opening of the 2020-2021 school year. Students will attend school in-person two days in a given week, and have three days of remote learning. Remote learning experiences will be similar to that which was provided in the spring of 2020, however remote learning will be required of all students, will be more robust and will result in report cards issued at all levels. Cohort A will attend Monday and Tuesday in person and have remote instruction on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. Cohort B will attend school remotely Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday and have in-person learning on Thursday and Friday. In this model, teachers would use Wednesdays to plan and prepare for the week's lessons, both remote and in-person and the building will be deep cleaned, which is why there is no in-person class that day. This hybrid plan also enables us to bring a subset of students in greatest need of in-person instruction and support, particularly students with disabilities, back to school four days a week in smaller, distanced settings with all other precautions in place.

We recognize that the circumstances of every family and staff member are different, and that no plan ultimately will satisfy everyone in our community. But rest assured that we are working diligently to explore every option available to us, that we remain guided by the science to keep our students and staff safe and healthy, and that we will be prepared to make adjustments along the way if the public health conditions or other variables change over time. Due to concerns in regards to spacing and mixing students, Surround Care will not be available at the beginning of the year. If restrictions are lifted later in the year, Surround Care may reopen.

Enclosed, you will find a “Family Information Sheet” that lists the cohort to which your child belongs. This sheet seeks information about your participation in the hybrid learning model, transportation for your child and your family need for Surround Care. It is imperative that you fill out this sheet and return it in the envelope provided by August 12, 2020 so that we may continue planning for the upcoming school year.

Please take time to read this entire plan as it contains important details about the upcoming school year including details about Special Education Services and Preschool.

I am confident that we can prioritize both safety and learning as we prepare for the start of a successful school year. Thank you for your patience and cooperation in these difficult times.

Sincerely,

Thomas J. Lynch, Superintendent of Schools

Descriptions of the Three Models of Learning for Berkley Public Schools

Option One: In-Person Learning Model with Restrictions:

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 the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). In this model, some students’ families may decide to engage in a remote learning model, provided by the school district, while the rest of the school returns in-person full time.

While all students would be at school in this model, the school day and environment would be vastly different in order for the Berkley Public Schools to minimally comply with the DESE requirements. For example:

- Desks must be spaced a minimum of three feet apart with a recommended spacing of six feet. The classroom size and class sizes at both Berkley Community School and Berkley Middle School would barely allow for the minimum space requirements to be met.
- Given the spacing requirements, students would need to remain seated for the majority of the day as there would not be adequate space for movement around the classroom while maintaining social distancing.
- Arrival and Dismissal of students would involve over 500 students at Berkley Community School and over 400 students at Berkley Middle School entering and exiting the building while practicing Social Distancing which would likely result in unsafe situations for students.
- Protocols such as students needing to eat in their classrooms would need to be in place due to the number of students present at school, however, the classrooms cannot accommodate the six feet of required space when students remove their masks to eat. The same would be true of snack time for Community School students.

- Bathroom use and sink use for handwashing would be time consuming and possibly involve long wait times for students due to the number of children present.
- Student learning would be drastically different than what students are accustomed to as they will not be able to engage in group work, partner work or move freely about the school.
- All Unified Arts Classes will be held in the classrooms at the elementary school level, with the exception of Physical Education which will be held outside. Students will travel to these classes in cohort groups at the middle school level.
- Regular cleaning and sanitizing protocols will be in place according to the procedures required by the DESE.

Option 2: Hybrid Learning Model

The Hybrid Learning Model is a blended approach between in-school learning and remote learning. In this model, Students attend school two days per week in person with safety requirements and three days per week remotely. Every student will have the opportunity to attend school, in person each week. Berkley Public Schools will employ a Cohort Model for this option. Students assigned to **Cohort A** attend school in-person on Monday and Tuesday and learn remotely through teacher provided videos and assignments on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. Students assigned to **Cohort B** learn remotely through teacher provided videos and assignments on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday and attend school-in person on Thursday and Friday. Students in the same family will be assigned to the same cohort. In this model, some students' families may decide to engage in a remote learning model, provided by the school district, while the rest of the school returns in-person full time.

With the Hybrid Model, approximately half of the student body would be present at school on each of the in-person learning days. As such, spacing of desks in classrooms would allow more than the minimum requirements of the DESE. The decreased number of students in each classroom would allow for some opportunities for students to learn in different areas of the classroom safely and while complying with the guidelines of the DESE.

BPS Hybrid Model Schedule

Cohort A In School		Cohort B Remote Learning
Monday	Wednesday is a remote learning day for both cohorts of students. This will provide the opportunity for a deep cleaning of the school buildings between cohorts (which will also happen each weekend) and provide time for teachers to engage in preparation and professional responsibilities to ensure a robust in person and remote learning experience for students.	Monday
Tuesday		Tuesday
Cohort A Remote Learning		Wednesday
Wednesday		Cohort B In School
Thursday		Thursday
Friday		Friday

Special Note for Preschool Families: Due to the small class sizes that are maintained at the Preschool level, the preschool program will operate on its normal schedule, even when the rest of the school is in the hybrid model. Thus, there will be a five day class M-F mornings, three day classes for four year olds on M-W-F mornings and afternoons and two day classes for three year olds on T-Th mornings and afternoons. Social distancing and health and safety guidelines will be maintained. Full cleaning will take place between all sessions.

Hybrid Model Considerations for Special Education and High Risk Students: In compliance with the recommendations of the DESE, some Special Education Students and High Risk students will be invited to participate in 4 days of in person learning. All students who receive IEP services will be provided with all services specified in their IEP regardless of which Cohort they are assigned.

Remote Learning Requirements: During the remote learning days, each student will engage in 8 academic lessons and related assignments and 4 Unified Arts lessons and related assignments. Requirements for Special Education staff and students will be developed individually.

Support for Remote Learning: Berkley Public Schools will support students and families during remote learning times in many ways. All students will have a platform for remote learning which will streamline the manner in which videos and assignments are received and work is returned. For students in Kindergarten and Grade One, the “See Saw” Platform will be utilized. Students in Grades 2 through 8 will have access to Google Classroom. Parent information and information and instruction for students, as appropriate, will be provided for both platforms.

Additionally, laptops/Chromebooks as well as internet access will be provided for families in need.

Virtual Meetings: In addition to in-person learning and remote learning experiences, students will have virtual meetings with their teachers. This will vary by grade level, however, all grades will have a minimum of one virtual meeting per week.

With approximately half of the students present at school on in-person learning days, the Berkley Public Schools can better comply with the DESE requirements. For example:

- Desks will be able to be spaced well in excess of the three foot minimum and closer to the recommended spacing of six feet.
- The decreased number of students in each classroom will allow for limited flexibility for classroom experiences other than remaining seated at student desks. While this plan will not allow for full movement due to health and safety requirements, this model provides greater flexibility than the full return to in person instruction model.
- Arrival and Dismissal of students will involve significantly smaller numbers of students entering and exiting the building while practicing Social Distancing. This will enable school staff to better ensure students safety at these times.
- With the addition of a lunch shift at both schools, all students with the exception of Kindergarteners, who will eat in their classrooms, will eat in the cafeteria while maintaining appropriate social distancing. Students at the elementary school level would safely be able to engage in snack time in their classrooms.
- Lunches will be available as a drive through service at Berkley Community School M-F from 11:00a.m.-12:00p.m. for students in need during the remote learning days.
- Bathroom use and sink use for handwashing would be more manageable due to the smaller number of children present.
- Student learning opportunities, while still observing social distancing, will be able to be more varied due to the physical space available in the classrooms.
- All Unified Arts Classes, with the exception of Physical Education which will be held outside, will be held in the classrooms at the elementary school level. Students will travel to these classes in cohort groups at the middle school level.
- To help vary instructional presentations in the classroom, all students in grades K-8 will have access to laptops or Chromebooks at school.
- Regular cleaning and sanitizing protocols will be in place according to the procedures required by the DESE.
- Teachers will provide access to any learning materials that are needed for remote learning. These may include textbooks, workbooks and other learning materials.
- Assessment of student work will take place in accord with the MA Curriculum standards for both in class and remote learning products.
- Report cards will be issued each quarter.

Option Three: Full Remote Learning

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. Structured Learning Time requirements apply to remote learning. While there will be some variability in the way that remote learning is presented at various grades across our district, the overall goal is to provide a balanced presentation for all students. The general parameters for this plan will be as follows:

Teacher Directed Learning

All students will receive video recorded lessons with related assignments each week in each content area. The lessons will follow the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks, and will include robust learning experiences for students. The lessons will provide reinforcement for topics already presented and/or exposure to new concepts. Participation is required for all learners and will be tracked through assignments turned in via the online portals for each grade level. Attendance will be taken at all virtual class meetings and lessons. Lessons presented will be designed to be accessible for all learners, and special care will be taken to address students with special learning needs.

At the PK-5 grade levels, teachers will have shared responsibility for the lesson videos with each teacher providing videos that will be shared with the entire grade level of students. At the 6-8 grade levels, lessons will be provided by each content area teacher.

Special Educators will ensure that students receive all services and interventions specified on each child's IEP. They will also work with grade level teachers to determine the best way to meet student needs.

Unified Arts Teachers will provide video recorded lessons for students at all grade levels, K-8.

Students will be provided with textbooks, workbooks and other learning materials for use at home during the time of remote learning.

Grading of student work/participation will be done in accordance with school policies and procedures. Feedback on work products will be provided to all students. Students will receive report cards with standards based grades (PK-2) and letter grades (3-8).

Virtual Meetings/Check In's: In addition to in-person learning and remote learning experiences, students will have virtual meetings with their teachers. During these meetings, teachers may engage in instruction, social opportunities for students, or provide help to students on content being covered.

Teacher/Student Check-Ins

Teachers will check in regularly with their students. In addition to the virtual meetings/check-ins teachers may check in with phone calls, notes, and/or emails.

Lunches: Lunches will be provided as a drive through service at Berkley Community School M-F from 11:00a.m.-12:00p.m.

Support for Remote Learning: Berkley Public Schools will support students and families during remote learning times in many ways. All students will have a platform for remote learning which will streamline the manner in which videos and assignments are received and work is returned. For students in Kindergarten and Grade One, the “See Saw” Platform will be utilized. Students in Grades 2 through 8 will have access to Google Classroom. Parent information and information and instruction for students, as appropriate, will be provided for both platforms. Additionally, laptops/Chromebooks as well as internet access will be provided for families in need.

Logistical Information for In-Person School Days:

Class Sizes: Every effort has been made to ensure the smallest classes possible. This includes hiring three additional teachers for grades 1, 4 and 7 due to high enrollments

Student Arrival: Students in grades K-8 will arrive by bus or by car drop off. Only students and staff will enter the school buildings. For elementary aged children, a large amount of staff will be on hand to help students to their classrooms.

Cars: Drop-off for students will begin at 8:05 at the Berkley Middle School and will begin at 8:50 at the Berkley Community School. Teachers will be in their classrooms and ready to receive students. Further information regarding drop off will be sent closer to the beginning of the school year.

Buses: Buses will be emptied two at a time. Students will exit buses by grade and walk to their classrooms in a single file, socially distanced line. Students will enter the school building by both the lobby door and the cafeteria hallway door at the Community School. At the Middle School, students will enter the building and proceed to their grade level staircase. Staff will be present to encourage students to maintain social distance.

Kindergarten: School staff will be on hand to assist children with getting to their classes both as students enter from buses and as they are dropped off. Appropriate social distancing will be maintained.

Preschool: Preschool drop-off and pickup will take place at the playground doors to the classrooms. One adult may walk the child to the door of the preschool playground where they will be greeted by program staff and enter the classroom. Parents/Caregivers must follow all social distancing regulations and wear a mask when dropping off/picking up.

Nametags: At the elementary school level, teachers will provide name tags with student names/class on them that will be used for the first three weeks of the school year.

Grab and Go Breakfast Procedure: Students wishing to purchase a Grab and Go Breakfast may do so. These students will wait in an appropriately spaced line to get their food and then proceed to their classrooms.

Mask Breaks: It is vital that students and staff have multiple opportunities throughout the day to take breaks from wearing masks. All classes will schedule several breaks each day.

Floor Markers: Floor markers will be placed strategically in both school buildings to ensure social distance is maintained while waiting in line.

Hand Washing Procedures: School staff will supervise students to ensure they engage in effective handwashing techniques. The school nurses will provide education for students on proper handwashing techniques.

Hand Sanitizer: Hand sanitizer will be provided in classrooms as well as adjacent to common areas. The use of hand sanitizer is encouraged, especially when a sink is not readily available.

Elementary School Snack Procedure: Students will have snack at their own desks. There will be no sharing of snacks at any time.

Birthdays and Other Special Activities Involving Celebrations with Food: At the elementary school level, students will be recognized in their classrooms on their birthdays, however, no treats may be brought from home for birthday or other celebrations at this time.

Recess Procedure: During recess at the elementary school level, students will play in designated areas by class.

Dismissal Procedure: More information on this will be forthcoming.

Student Classroom Materials: Student supplies may not be stored communally. Each grade level will provide a list of requested classroom learning supplies that will be used only by that student.

BCS Student of the Month Program: We will continue to recognize Students of the Month, however, we will not have the celebratory brunches during this school year. We will recognize these students in other ways as a school and an individual classrooms.

Use of Outdoor Spaces for Learning: Teachers will be encouraged to utilize outside spaces for instruction as appropriate for their class.

Attendance Incentives: Due to the severity of COVID-19, the foremost focus is on student health and safety, therefore, there will be no attendance initiatives during the 2020-2021 school year.

Health & Safety Information:

Masks: All students in grades 2-8 and all staff of the Berkley Public Schools are required to wear masks at all times if you are in the presence of others. While students in PK-1 are not required to wear masks, mask use is strongly encouraged. Masks will be provided by student's families, and an extra mask should be placed in each child's school bag. Masks should be washed daily. The school has a supply of masks for student or staff use in the event one is forgotten, damaged, etc.

Social Distancing: The Berkley Public Schools will follow all recommendations from the DESE regarding Social Distancing. This includes observing a 6 foot social distance when students are

waiting in lines, etc. Desks will be placed a minimum of three, but generally six feet apart in classrooms.

Nursing Services: The Berkley Community School and the Berkley Middle School are each staffed by a full time school nurse. The nurses in each building are knowledgeable about the Coronavirus and well-versed in the policies of the DESE regarding the pandemic.

Students/Staff Presenting with COVID-19 Symptoms: Students or staff who exhibit symptoms of COVID-19 will report directly to the Nurse's Office. . Each school has established a COVID-19 isolation area for assessment of COVID-19 symptoms. The school nurses will strictly follow the guidance about exclusion from school for Coronavirus symptoms.

Screening of Students for COVID: Parents are asked to screen their child(ren) daily for symptoms of COVID-19 before sending the child(ren) to school. Parents are advised to keep children home if they exhibit any symptoms of COVID-19.

Cleaning Protocols: Classrooms will be sanitized daily by the custodial staff in accordance with the requirements of the DESE.

Classroom Ventilation Units: Each classroom is equipped with its own ventilation unit which vents directly to the outside. Filters in these units are changed at regular intervals during the school year.

Use of Safety Equipment: Staff that needs to be in close proximity to students to meet individual educational, health, behavioral, emotional or hygiene needs will utilize Safety Equipment, otherwise known as Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) will be provided to. This equipment may include gowns, face shields, gloves, etc.

Out of School Time Plan:

Surround Care: The Berkley Public Schools will offer before and after school care through the Surround Care program to students on their in person learning days. Details about the structure, guidelines and cost for this program will be made available once the need is determined through the Family Information Sheet. If there is sufficient interest in this program, information about registration will be sent to all interested families.

Student Supports and Professional Learning:

Behavioral and Emotional Support: The staff of Berkley Public Schools understand the challenges that this pandemic has presented for many families, and the difficulties it poses for many children. If you are in need of behavioral or emotional support for your child, please contact Melissa Abrego, the Administrator for Student Services (508)822-5251 or your child's building Principal: Jennifer Francisco at Berkley Community School (508)822-9550 or Kimberly Hebert at Berkley Middle School (508)884-9434.

Learning Needs: If you have concerns about your child's progress in school or his/her ability to learn effectively, please discuss your concerns with your child's teacher. You may also contact

Melissa Abrego, the Administrator for Student Services (508)822-5251 or your child's building Principal: Jennifer Francisco at Berkley Community School (508)822-9550 or Kimberly Hebert at Berkley Middle School (508)884-9434.

Food Needs: If you are in need of support with obtaining free/reduced breakfast and lunch for your child please contact Stacy Newhook or Andrea Porter at (508)822-5220. If you would benefit from food assistance from the town Food Pantry, please contact Open Shelves Food Pantry at (508)823-3273.

2020-2021 Berkley Public Schools Calendar

Certification of Health and Safety Requirements: The Berkley Public Schools will meet the final health and safety requirements issued by DESE on July 22, 2020.

Closing:

The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in unprecedented changes in all areas of our lives, including educating our children. However, the close knit nature of the community of Berkley, the commitment of the staff, faculty and administration of the Berkley Public schools, the guidance of the Berkley School Committee, and the unwavering support of the families of our students creates success no matter the challenge. While no plan can adequately detail every aspect of life in the school setting, we hope this plan was helpful to you in understanding the model that is proposed for the start of this school year as well as the models that may be utilized throughout the year based on data about the progression of the Coronavirus.

Please know that the staff, faculty and administration of the Berkley Public Schools are committed to providing a high quality, developmentally appropriate and rigorous educational experience for our students regardless of the model.

If you have questions or concerns about this plan, please contact:

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