



**Shrewsbury Public Schools
Reopening Plan Analysis Document
Required Template for Submission to the
Massachusetts Department of Elementary & Secondary Education
July 29, 2020**

Please click [here](#) to access the online form to submit your preliminary district plan summary.

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

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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.

Several key findings informed our in-person feasibility study. DESE guidance, the capacity of our school facilities, our staffing plan, related budget considerations and most importantly, feedback from our staff and families were all considered as part of the self evaluation. It should be noted however, that ultimately our preferred plan was shaped by our core values, taken together with a collective vision for an engaging instructional model for students in Shrewsbury that can be provided with the health and safety of students and staff being paramount.

In the early stages of school closure, our district adopted the [core principles](#) that shaped initial district decisions; these collective interests continue to inform our efforts. **Our top priority is the health, safety, and well-being of our students and staff.** The primacy of this concern drives every aspect of our planning, including consideration of the various components of the models of learning that we describe later in this document. Our shared beliefs also helped us to meaningfully surface and address the challenges that reopening may present our families, students and staff.

Finally, an assessment of our physical plants was also key to our planning. Principals and other administrators conducted individual reviews of each school facility in order to understand how well the existing spaces in each building would serve us in the “next normal.” This needs analysis helped members of the Reopening Task Force to determine how well we would be able to meet and sustain safety procedures. Close examination of classroom configurations, traffic patterns and the suitability of large spaces for lunches and other community routines were all considered. For example, the desire to ensure consistency on the one hand and space constraints at several schools on the other has resulted in a recommendation that we limit student capacity through an alternating schedule of in-person and remote learning with fewer students present on campus.

2. Reopening Learning Models

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.

Grade Span	In-Person	Hybrid	Remote
Elementary		X	
Middle		X	
High		X	

Based on the work of our Reopening Task Force, we will recommend a hybrid learning model to the Shrewsbury School Committee. Specifically, we will address the diverse needs of our students with an instructional model that features both in-person instruction and remote learning. To do this well, we must plan to provide instruction to four distinct groups of students.

- Cohort A includes high needs students, including some English language learners, some students with disabilities, and some children that did not consistently engage in remote learning during school closure. These students will attend school in person whenever school is in session, joining with peers in cohorts B and C when feasible.
- Cohorts B and C represent the remaining students, split approximately in half into two cohorts, in order to have fewer students present in school buildings at one time to enable six-foot physical distancing. Children in these two cohorts will rotate in-person instruction with remote learning, with an alternating schedule providing at least two in-person learning days per week for each cohort.
- Cohort D describes students whose families elect to continue with full remote learning. Recent survey results suggest that about 17% of families may opt for this model, with 16% undecided. Although we have some options in mind, we are waiting for the results of DESE's statewide learning platform vendor process, and we anticipate needing more specific numbers regarding students as well as additional staffing information in order to finalize the instructional plan for students in this group.

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:

Our goal is to implement the same hybrid model across levels in order to keep routines simple for working parents and predictable for families with students at more than one level. Having considered a range of models, in order to reduce the number of students in a school building and maintain six-foot physical distancing for classroom seating, we will be recommending an alternating in-person and remote hybrid model. Currently, we are vetting the details of a model where 1) students in Cohort B would attend school on Mondays and Tuesdays while Cohort C learns remotely; 2) students in Cohorts B & C would alternate on Wednesdays, with one cohort attending a half day of in-person learning with remote learning in the afternoon, while the other cohort is in full remote learning all day, OR all students in Cohorts B & C would engage in full remote learning on Wednesdays, with a half day of “live” learning in the morning and asynchronous learning in the afternoon to enable staff collaboration and coordination; and 3) students in Cohort C would attend school on Thursday and Friday while Cohort B learns remotely. In this way all students would attend school each week, enabling educators to “chunk” instruction across settings with the goal of fostering connections, establishing expectations and building routines effectively.

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.**

At this time, given the space and capacity constraints mentioned above, we are unable to entertain a model that would allow all students and staff to return to in-person instruction simultaneously, even with three-foot distancing. That said, when conditions improve sufficiently in Massachusetts such that physical distancing is no longer required, we would certainly plan to resume school “as it was” to the greatest extent possible. Because in-person instruction in this model is so familiar, we will spend the least amount of time describing it. Suffice to say that our “old” policies, procedures, processes and practices would apply, including provisions for supporting the full range of diverse student needs that exist in Shrewsbury, while benefiting from the increased use of technology and more robust collaboration that has happened as a result of our district’s experiences last spring with the closure.

o Will any of your students be learning fully remotely?

Our surveying of families indicated that about 25% of families would elect to keep their child learning fully remotely if we were to return to in-person school this fall with three-foot physical distancing, with 25% undecided.

o Anticipated percent of students learning remotely if in-person instruction is possible:

25% if this fall with three-foot distancing (25% undecided); 17% if we have a hybrid model (16% undecided); when physical distancing requirements are removed (e.g., if a vaccine is implemented), likely 0-2%

In order to meet the needs of students who opt for fully remote learning even if the district has some level of in-person instruction, we recommend that:

- Remote class sizes (or “caseloads”) be limited to 24-30 students, depending on the grade span
- The time allotments listed in the revised remote learning model per subject area would remain consistent.
 - Some synchronous and asynchronous instruction focused on community connections and new learning per day
 - Some independent practice activities provide by teacher and some independent practice completed through software tools such as Freckle

Overall, we feel that it is not reasonable to expect that the educators responsible for implementing the alternating in-person/remote model also teach students who are in the fully remote cohort. In order to formulate a plan for students who will be fully remote, we have outlined two possible options for consideration, or a combination of the two:

OPTION 1: Shrewsbury Virtual Academy

If we opt for this approach, Shrewsbury educators seeking the opportunity to teach fully remotely would be assigned classes or course sections of students whose parents choose a fully remote instructional model for their children. Please note that in the absence of staffing data, this model is still under consideration. At this time we can only say that there may be licensed Shrewsbury Public Schools educators already employed by our district who might be assigned specifically to teaching the remote program. District leaders feel that, if viable, this option would work best at the elementary level.

OPTION 2: Outsourced Virtual Academy

If we elect for this option, we would use the forthcoming DESE remote learning vendors (still unknown at this time) or contract with an outside provider (like Edgenuity or Apex Learning) to provide the educational plans and/or specialized content to students whose families opt into a fully remote model. Having access to specialized courses would be especially important for students in Grades 9-12 seeking remote options for courses like Mandarin Chinese, for example. In this model there would also be the potential for Shrewsbury educators that are interested and able to teach remotely to serve as district liaisons to students and families as needed.

- 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.**

In addition to the information outlined in the description of an alternating model (see Part I, Question 2 above) here are some important details to note about the alternating in-person and remote learning model being proposed for Shrewsbury:

- It is suggested that preschoolers fall into Cohort A (always attending) and therefore children at this level will always attend school in person. Many preschool students are already in small classes on an alternating schedule, with high needs special education preschool students attending all or most days of the week.
- The K-12 student population who are not in Cohort A would be divided into two cohorts: Cohort B and Cohort C. We anticipate that families will desire to keep siblings on the same schedule, and we will make every effort to do so.
- When students in Cohort B attend school in-person, students in Cohort C would learn remotely through synchronous and asynchronous experiences. One option being explored is that on one day each week all students will participate in synchronous remote learning for a half day and asynchronous learning for the other half of the day in order to enable teacher training, planning, collaborative meetings and professional development as needed during that other half of the day. Currently the thinking is that Wednesday would be this all-remote day. Alternatively, another option is to have Cohorts B & C alternate weeks of coming

to school in-person for a half day on Wednesdays and having asynchronous remote learning in the afternoon, while the other cohort is in full remote mode that day.

- Cohorts will be diverse, inclusive, and heterogeneous (mixed ability groups). The curriculum content and pacing and the corresponding instructional experiences will be the same for both cohorts.
 - In the event there is no school on a day during a given week due to a holiday, it is suggested that the schedule will be adjusted to remove the all-remote day in favor of replacing any lost in-person day. For example, if Monday were a holiday, the Wednesday schedule for that week would become an in-person day for Cohort B.
 - In this learning model, school buildings will be thoroughly cleaned each evening and particularly on the evenings in between cohorts. For the remote portions of the program, we will need to determine the best schedule for weekly communications to families to allow sufficient time for families to plan and/or to provide additional support to the students who need it the most. Having determined that an alternating in-person model is the best match for the district at this time, we considered various iterations of this model.
 - At this time, it's difficult to accurately detail the schedule for a full academic day without more certainty about transportation, student enrollment, staffing needs and other considerations. That said, at the Elementary level, the team feels that there would be ample time for 30 minute special subjects (including Art, Music, Media and Physical Education) with the potential to extend to 40 minutes based on start time of school. Each classroom would see each specialist one time each week as follows:
 - In alternating in-person model students who are remote log into Zoom to access specialist instruction
 - Specials would alternate weekly so all students are able to participate in in-person specials twice each month and remote each month
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 is not merely online learning; we want our students to experience the richness of diverse learning experiences, including teacher-directed assignments, options to engage with content in multiple modalities, interdisciplinary projects, nature walks and integrated experiences with Art, Music, Media and Physical Education. Just as importantly, we seek to maintain connections with classroom communities and further opportunities for social emotional learning. Finally, choice and enrichment encourage our students to be self-directed. Accordingly, remote learning plans will continue to include:

- Pencil and paper practice of academic skills
- Online learning opportunities, and
- Interactive experiences that engage students and connect them to their teacher, other educators and to their classmates for the purpose of reviewing material, applying new skills and learning new concepts aligned with grade level standards

There are several positives associated with teaching and learning in a remote model, namely that a remote model allows more time for instruction. Moreover, this model is now familiar. Transitioning back to remote learning could enable a smooth, low-risk reentry and reduce the need for the stops and starts that may follow if there is a second wave of the pandemic in Massachusetts. On the other hand, assessment is key to effective teaching- and it's hard to assess and attend to students' diverse needs (including social and emotional health needs) in a remote model. Finally, remote learning is especially challenging for our youngest students, and parents working from home have difficulty supporting online access.

Guidance from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) has changed (received on Friday evening, July 24) and so too have our expectations for how often students will be expected to engage with their teachers and other educators in a remote model. In general, should SPS schools have to close, our educators would deliver much of the content students would experience in a typical school day, with the DESE guidance about power standards driving instructional planning.

To make the most of past successes and in an effort to address identified shortcomings from the emergency program implemented last spring, educators on the Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment team at all levels thoughtfully reviewed research on best practice. These findings, taken together with recommendations from the field are

reflected in the bullets that follow. Importantly, these principles will also inform teaching and learning plans during the 'remote learning' periods of an alternating in person/remote (DESE "hybrid") model.

- Moving forward our plan will include a weekly schedule of "live" interactive experiences with our educators for students and families according to a daily schedule, the specifics of which are still being worked through. If our district has to shift to full remote learning for students who would have started the year in an alternating in-person/remote hybrid model, it will be important to provide a robust amount of "time on learning" for each student utilizing both "live" interactive online experiences and "asynchronous" learning using both online and traditional learning resources. A recommended schedule for the amount of active learning time each day, not including "homework" for practice outside of the instructional "time on learning," is being finalized.
- Facilitating robust learning experiences for our students is a shared responsibility. Every educator will interact with students "live" online multiple times each week, with the understanding that the schedules for different educators (classroom teachers and special subjects teachers, for example) would vary. All educators would support students using Zoom, but those sessions could be organized as whole group class meetings, small group lessons, and perhaps even individual support or the provision of various student services like teletherapy, etc. ; interactions will vary in nature by level due to the different needs of students across grade spans, and by educator role.
- Educators will require students to complete ALL assignments, students will be graded, and will expect full and active participation in "live" sessions at all levels. Homework will be assigned to provide practice of established skills and should be considered additional practice time outside the instructional day. Finally there was consensus across levels that more emphasis on establishing clear expectations for student behavior during "live" interactions will be critical to successfully engaging all learners. Companion documents are being developed to make new expectations clear.

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.

Shrewsbury Public Schools has prioritized in-person instruction for students who are classified as high needs, and is prepared to meet the needs of these students if the District shifts to remote and/or hybrid learning. Students with disabilities will be provided with a free and appropriate public education consistent with their education, specialized instruction and/or related services. Liaisons will consult with the family to discuss the student's ability to access remote learning, as well as how and where specially designed instruction will occur.

- To the extent possible, in person services will be provided by the licensed practitioner with health and safety protocols in place. The specially designed instruction may occur through video conferencing or through teletherapy in a small group or individually. The licensed practitioner will design and deliver this instruction.
- In a hybrid model, Shrewsbury is dedicated to providing in-person instruction for those students classified as high needs through the Instruction and Services model of delivery as outlined by DESE. Students will be on campus to receive education from the general educator, as well as specially designed instruction in a small group or individually, with frequency outlined within the child's individualized plan. The specifically designed instruction may include structured lessons, teletherapy, video-based lessons, etc.
- If Shrewsbury needs to shift to remote learning, students will be given a specific schedule to follow outlining synchronous and asynchronous learning. Structured learning time will be designated to target the child's individual goals and services. Students will spend time working directly with teachers and related service providers through video conferencing and/or teletherapies. Asynchronous lessons will also be provided, as well as supplemental work for independence, maintenance and generalization of skills.
- School psychologists and adjustment counselors will collaborate with building administrators and educators to monitor student engagement. Family and student outreach is critical in students learning, and will be prioritized. For those students with disabilities, for whom did not engage in remote learning, on campus support will be made available with carryover activities provided by a paraprofessional. Mental health interventions will also be monitored for efficacy in student stabilization during this pandemic. Clinical staff will also monitor for

student basic needs (food, water, heat, etc.) and will make coordinated efforts to meet the student and family needs.

- Given the gap in assessment data that followed school closure, our schools will engage in an analysis of which students are at most risk. Using various methods, including observations by educators, as well as software tools alongside common assessments that can be administered in-person, educators will work to identify students that require additional supports and develop instructional plans accordingly, regardless of the reopening model used.
- Under an alternating schedule hybrid model, students flagged as “high needs” would be considered members of Cohort A and will attend in-person learning daily. Cohort A may include students on IEPs, English Language Learners, students in foster care, and students who are considered homeless, etc. Per DESE guidance, students in these groups will attend school in person whenever school is in session, joining with peers in cohorts B and C when feasible. If this is not feasible, whenever possible children in Cohort A will receive support from an assigned adult (i.e., paraprofessional, ABA Technicians, special educator, Title-I Tutor, etc.) in an alternate location or remotely.
- To ensure equitable access for all students, SPS educators may assign differentiated classwork, provide students more frequent feedback on the work they submit, structure small group support based on assessment data and/or continue to reach out to engage students who are not participating.
- As was the case prior to the pandemic, school-based teams will monitor high needs students, through “Early Intervention” or “Student Assistance” Teams, with the goals of monitoring progress and providing additional supports for students and/or families in need.