



VERITAS PREPARATORY CHARTER SCHOOL

Reopening Plan 2020-2021

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A. Executive Summary

Veritas Prep stands strong and committed to our mission to ensure every student is on a path to compete, achieve, and succeed in high school, college, and beyond during this very difficult time in our country's history. We remain steadfast in our commitment to meet each student's individual needs and to support Scholars to achieve academically through a tight-knit academic community, and we also know that during this pandemic we need to focus on health and safety. **To that end, our reopening plan adapts the successes of our in person academic program to a full remote program for at least the first trimester of the 20-21 school year, allowing us to focus on teaching and learning, to ensure psychological and physical safety of our Scholars, and to align with emerging data and research around the spread of the virus.**

The Springfield Public Schools decided to start the school year remotely and we aim to align our calendar with SPS whenever possible as a convenience to our families who have children in multiple schools. Given the percentage of our families leaning toward choosing remote prior to SPS deciding to open remotely, we feel it is necessary for us to start with our remote plan. We surveyed our families this summer, approximately $\frac{1}{3}$ indicated they would choose fully remote instruction, approximately $\frac{1}{3}$ were unsure, and approximately $\frac{1}{3}$ said they would send their children back to school. We will reevaluate at the end of the trimester, reviewing feedback from our teachers, staff, and families and data related to the continued spread of COVID-19 across the United States and in Massachusetts to determine whether to transition to a hybrid model of instruction, which is partially in person and partially remote. We expect to be able to open fully in person when safety guidelines from ESE and public health experts relax social distancing expectations dramatically, as the size of our facility limits our ability to open fully in person while adhering to the distancing expectations.

For the past several months, our team has been working to design three plans for submission as required by ESE--in person, hybrid (partially in person, partially remote), and full remote--so that we are able to toggle among these different plans as needed. We have convened five working groups made up of teachers and leaders in the areas of (1) academics, (2) special education and ELL services, (3) operations, (4) HR/staffing, (5) social-emotional learning/school culture. Our design process has leveraged our learning from the spring remote learning time, survey and interview feedback from Scholars, parents, and staff, and lessons learned from other high-performing schools and districts to inform our plans.

While we are deeply disappointed to not be opening in person with our Scholars, the Veritas team is committed and excited to make the absolute best we can out of a full remote learning environment. We are also ready and waiting eagerly to transition back to in person in either a hybrid or full in-person scenario when the health and safety metrics and guidelines allow us to do so. What follows in our reopening plan are details about each of the three plans we have in place. We were founded on the belief that all Scholars deserve an excellent education and deserve the individualized supports to help them succeed. Our plans aim to reflect that. We also know that plans are only as good as their execution, so to that end we have used our execution and implementation lessons from the spring to guide the development of these plans. We also are committed to evolving and improving plans as we execute them this fall, with systematic cycles of planning, execution, feedback loops, and revisions. Our Scholars deserve nothing less than our best.



B. Letter From the Superintendent to the Community

Dear Veritas Prep Community,

These past several months have been very challenging for all of us, and I could not be more grateful to be part of such a compassionate, caring and dedicated community of Scholars, parents, and educators. The faculty and staff of Veritas Prep have been working tenaciously on plans to reopen the school so that our Scholars can return to learning this fall in a safe environment. Though nothing about this time and this plan feels normal, we are making our best effort to get learning back on track and make sure that our Scholars come out of this pandemic healthy, strong, and even smarter than before! It is our main focus to ensure that despite the disruption to life as we knew it, our Scholars stay on track to compete, achieve and succeed in high school, college and beyond.

In order to ensure both the success and safety of our Scholars, families, and staff, we have decided to begin the school year on September 15, 2020, with remote learning only through the end of the first trimester. During this time, we will track student learning, emerging data and research about COVID-19, and feedback from our Scholars, families, and educators to determine when we can safely transition to a hybrid model. This decision was informed by current and emerging data around the continued spread of COVID-19, feedback from families and staff, and the decision by SPS to stay remote through the first marking period. We respect our sending district's decision, and many of our families have Scholars enrolled in Veritas and SPS. Given that, we know that it will be beneficial to align our plan and our calendars with that of SPS and that many of the concerns that prompted the district to go full remote are similar to ours.

We have shored up our remote learning program to provide a more structured, rigorous experience for Scholars learning remotely. We have procured and piloted new technology tools to improve the remote learning experience and to ensure that Scholars can engage in rigorous, standards-based learning that meets structured learning time requirements, with strong systems for attendance and grading to ensure each student receives a high-quality academic program. We began training for teachers this week and will follow with onboarding for families and Scholars as we implement these new systems and routines.

These are unprecedented times for all of us and we are learning as we go. We want and need your thoughts, concerns, questions and input to ensure we are meeting your expectations and to make improvements to our plan as we move through the school year together. Please reach out to me or anyone on our team by phone, email or text at any time. We appreciate each of you so very much and truly feel grateful to be part of a community like ours at a time like this.

Families, please stay tuned for updates around meeting your teachers and picking up your chromebooks and instructional supplies. To our fifth grade families joining Veritas this year: we are so excited to meet you and welcome you to our community!

Sincerely,

Rachel Romano, Executive Director

C. **In-person learning model:**

For this learning model, Scholars receive in-person instruction full time in school environments that have been appropriately modified to address health and safety requirements issued by DESE. We are unable at this time to offer in person instruction full time that meets the health and safety requirements, primarily because of the facility constraints. In our report that we submitted to the state regarding our facilities assessment on August 1, we detailed the room configurations for our building and concluded that even with a three feet separation between Scholars in classrooms and use of additional spaces, we are not able to get every student back into the building at the same time. We anticipate when we do reopen for full-time in-person instruction, there will be revised health and safety protocols for us to follow. We are confident that the planning we have done for our hybrid model around operational procedures will be helpful for us when we get ready to plan for full-time in-person instruction for all. Also, the planning we have done for our hybrid and remote models around academic interventions will be helpful and important to shoring up our full-time in-person instructional model.

D. **Hybrid learning model**

For this learning model, Scholars receive **a combination of in-person instruction and remote instruction**. In a hybrid model, **some High Needs Scholars may participate in full-time in-person instruction to ensure effective accommodations, and some families may still decide to keep their children full-time remote**.

Our hybrid model prioritizes the health and safety guidelines provided by the state and allows for Scholars to easily go back and forth between remote learning and in person learning. For in person instruction, the set up of the classroom and the school schedule allows for Scholars to be 6 feet apart (approximately 11 Scholars per class), the ability to take mask breaks, to consume meals safely, and to transition in and around the building safely following social distancing protocols. Scholars will be assigned to one of four cohorts:

- Cohort A: Scholars in Cohort A would attend in-person on Mondays and Tuesdays then learn remotely Thursdays and Fridays and half days Wednesdays
- Cohort B: Scholars in Cohort B would attend in-person on Thursdays and Fridays then learn remotely Mondays and Tuesdays and half days on Wednesdays
- Cohort C: Scholars in Cohort C would attend in-person Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays then learn remotely on Wednesdays. We will be inviting Scholars to join Cohort C based on their need:
 - Scholars requiring C-grid services on their IEPs
 - Level 1 and Level 2 ELLs
 - Scholars in the spring who completed less than 50% of their remote learning work.
- Cohort D: Scholars in Cohort D would learn remotely all school days by choice. If parents are uncomfortable with sending their Scholars to school, they may opt to

enroll their Scholars into cohort D (the all remote learning cohort) at any time. If Scholars are enrolled in Cohort D to start the year and parents wish to begin sending them to school we will allow parents to switch to another cohort approximately monthly. This will give us the time to plan staffing and to run orientation groups for new scholars joining our hybrid or in person program.

Operationally, our hybrid model allows for flow between in person learning and remote learning in the following ways:

(1) Alignment of schedule and coursework between in person days and remote days:

The daily schedule remains the same whether a student is in school or engaging in remote learning at home. This is important to maintain consistency, as most Scholars will toggle between remote and in-person learning. Some classes will be live streamed from class using Zoom for Scholars who are remote. This will ensure that the pacing and routine remains consistent across all cohorts and that we are meeting the structured learning time requirements for all Scholars regardless of where they are learning. Some classes on the schedule are noted as asynchronous or self-paced. This means that Scholars at home do not need to stay logged into our video platform Zoom during these class periods, though they have the option to stay logged in to the video platform if that helps them to stay focused. When they are not logged in to the video platform, Scholars will have self-paced lessons during these times that are the same lessons or content that Scholars who are in school in person are accessing. Teachers will provide feedback on Scholars' work in those self paced lessons.

In our proposed schedule, we identify time for all core subjects, for SEL supports, for tutoring, and for mask and lunch breaks. We expect math, reading, and the first portion of writing class to be taught synchronously (live via video with their teacher instructing) while Scholars complete the second half of writing class, history, and science asynchronously (self-paced with digital materials, resources, and supports). Our sample daily schedule allows for toggling between remote and hybrid/in person learning is below. The exact times are subject to change based on transportation and rosters.

The headlines of the schedule are: 45 minutes of live social-emotional/organization support at the front and back end of each day, approximately 4 hours of live instructional support, approximately two hours of asynchronous or self-paced instructional support, 1 ½ hours of breaks throughout the day strategically placed to combat Zoom/video fatigue.

Sample Schedule for Hybrid and Remote Model: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday*	
Time	Activity
7:30-8:15	Arrival/Morning Procedure/Breakfast (if in person ride bus, breakfast in the classroom; if at home remote, wake up, get supplies and materials ready)
8:15-8:45	SEL/Advisory Time (LIVE via Zoom for remote)
8:45-9:45	Math Problem-Solving (LIVE via Zoom for remote)
9:45-10:00	Break (either mask break if in person, at home break if remote)
10:00-10:50	Literature (LIVE via Zoom for remote)
10:50 -11:55	Composition (LIVE via Zoom for remote)
11:55-12:25	Lunch Break
12:25-1:15	Science (self-paced/asynchronous for remote)
1:15-2:00	Social Studies (self-paced/asynchronous for remote)
2:00-2:15	Break (either mask break if in person, at home break if remote)
2:15-2:45	Math 2 (LIVE via Zoom for remote)
2:45-3:15	Tutoring (LIVE via Zoom for remote)
3:15-3:30	Closing Circle (LIVE via Zoom for remote)

*** Wednesdays are a half day for Scholars, as teachers have PD on Wednesday afternoons**

(2) Preservation of our co-advisor model:

Because of our co-advisor model that pairs two teachers with one group of Scholars, we are already uniquely positioned to implement many of the safety and health operational guidelines that are required by the state for reopening partially in person. ESE and public health guidelines emphasize keeping Scholars and teachers in small, self-contained cohorts so as to prevent or contain the spread of COVID-19. This will make the transition back to in-person seamless for our Scholars.

Our co-advisor model also promotes strong student-teacher relationships because of the small student-teacher ratio. This ratio is key to being able to support Scholars from both a social-emotional perspective and an academic needs perspective, which is more important than ever during this crisis and in a remote environment where it can be harder to build personal relationships. For special education and ELLs, the co-advisor model is especially important because it allows for Scholars' academic needs to be deeply known by both a general educator as well as by their special education and ESL teachers so that Scholars' experience in school is more cohesive and consistent.

(3) Systematic technology and materials support:

From a technology and materials perspective, we are prepared to flow back and forth between remote and in person. With the help of federal competitive technology grants, we have been able to secure new Chromebooks and support Scholars' internet access at home. From an operational perspective, we are ready to supply each and every one of our Scholars with Chromebooks, internet access when needed, additional technology as needed, especially for Scholars with unique needs, materials and supplies to support non-computer based learning, and a safe means to transport these materials back and forth from home.

This spring and summer we have systematically investigated and selected a suite of technology tools that will enhance the teaching and learning experience for all Scholars by making read-aloud supports, translation supports, and individualized tutoring more easily accessible. The technology tools we have selected also allow for teachers to track student progress and differentiate for Scholars' needs more effectively than they could in the spring remote learning environment. Whether in person or remote, we will use these technology tools to support student learning, making it easier for Scholars to flow back and forth between an in person environment or a remote environment.

(4) Increased Supports around Digital Literacy and SEL: In a hybrid model, curriculum and lesson plans in the initial weeks of school will focus on the social and emotional needs of Scholars as well as the education and training of staff, Scholars and families in digital literacy routines and procedures. With the chances of a hybrid model transitioning quickly into a remote model or vice versa, equipping staff and Scholars with the ability to be flexible and comfortable learning remotely is crucial. This is also necessary for the Scholars whose families choose to enroll in a fully remote plan for part or all of the school year. Some examples of what these supports include are morning check-in with the teacher for all Scholars, both in person and remote; clear, consistent guidelines for how to set up Google classroom to make it easier for Scholars and parents to navigate; daily use of Google classroom and tech tools whether in person or not; regular SEL time for Scholars whether they are in person or not; and new and improved incentives and celebrations to support Scholars whether they are in person or remote.

E. Remote learning model:

In this learning model, remote learning is the default mode of instruction for all Scholars, though some High Needs Scholars may still be served in-person full-time or through a hybrid model when safety and public health guidelines are able to be implemented. At this point in time, we have decided to open for the first trimester fully remote. Once we have launched our remote program, we will then begin to investigate serving some High Needs Scholars in person starting with in-person evaluations and in-person related services.

While we are starting with a full remote model, our goal is to be ready to transition quickly to either a hybrid or in-person model. In our full remote model, Scholars will still be assigned to an advisory, where they have two main teachers and one group of Scholars to learn with throughout the day, just as they would be in a hybrid or in person model. Special education and ESL teachers both push in to live video classes, working with Scholars in breakout rooms, and pull Scholars out at designated times in the day for additional small-group instruction, just as they would be in a hybrid or in-person model.

To design our remote program for the fall, we have integrated key lessons learned from our Scholars, parents, and staff this past spring. We have also been actively researching lessons learned from other high-performing schools. We are excited to provide the best possible remote program for our Scholars that maintains the strong, close-knit teacher-student relationships, the rigorous and engaging academic curriculum, and the intense individualized supports--both social emotional and academic--for Scholars that make Veritas unique. We will continue to implement the key parts of our program that we were able to successfully achieve this spring, the most important of which was ensuring every single one of our Scholars had a Chromebook and a hotspot if needed. We also learned a lot about how best to teach via a video platform and how to track student engagement. Five key changes to the fall remote learning plan, determined using feedback from parents, Scholars, and staff on the experience in the spring, are:

1. **Increase live learning via Zoom (AKA synchronous learning opportunities):** Our remote program will offer daily live instruction at the same times each day. This spring, teachers offered anywhere from two to four live touchpoints during the week. Parents, Scholars, and teachers found the live instruction important to both building relationships and providing real-time support and structure for Scholars.
2. **Make the schedule more predictable by grade level and easily understood by all:** Our remote program has a daily, predictable schedule with clarity around when Scholars are required to participate in live classes, when Scholars should be working on self-paced lessons, and when Scholars are to be accessing individualized supports such as tutoring, teletherapy, speech and language services, etc. This spring, in the rush of transitioning to remote learning, each grade level and co-advisor made a schedule, but we learned that we have to have a master school schedule so that we can better align services and supports

for individual Scholars, especially our most vulnerable Scholars. The headlines of our remote schedule, which is meant to align with our hybrid plan, are: 45 minutes of LIVE social-emotional/organization support, approximately 4 hours of LIVE instructional support, approximately two hours of asynchronous instructional support, and 1 ½ hours of breaks strategically placed throughout the day to combat Zoom/video fatigue. The sample schedule in the hybrid program is the same for the remote program so that we can pivot quickly to hybrid as needed and to provide consistency for Scholars.

- 3. Create time for social emotional supports each day:** Part of what makes our in-person program at Veritas so strong are the robust social emotional supports and close student-teacher relationships that we work hard to cultivate. In our normal in-person program, we have strong routines and rituals such as morning check-in time, community meetings, circle time, social emotional lessons, informal check-ins, lunch bunches, weekly incentives and celebrations, and clubs. When we transitioned to a remote program in the spring, a lot of these social emotional supports were not as systematic. Our team has been working throughout the summer to shore up these supports in a remote or hybrid program. The daily schedule for our remote program now builds in time for morning and end of day check-ins as a whole class, a critical touchpoint to help middle school Scholars kick off and wrap up their day. Sometimes this time will be a formal SEL lesson. Other times this advisory time will be an informal check in, depending on the needs of the class. Grade level teams are working to plan virtual community meetings and celebrations, and we have clearer systems for tracking counseling referrals for Scholars who may need additional support such as clinical small groups or one to one counseling. We administer the PEAR assessment at the beginning of the year to help determine Scholars' social emotional needs and themes or trends across groups of Scholars to help shape our SEL lessons.
- 4. Identify technology tools to support both the general education curriculum and interventions:** Our team has been using this remote learning environment as an opportunity to strengthen the technology tools we use in our Veritas program. This spring we did a systematic inventory of the different technology tools our teachers and Scholars use, identified gaps and repetitions, and settled on a set of technology tools that will enhance both a remote and in-person teaching and learning experience for Scholars and teachers, especially for our most vulnerable Scholars who struggle the most with learning in either environment--remote or in person. We are also planning better training and support for Scholars and parents around technology. The first days of schools will include teaching Scholars key routines and procedures around their technology tools, which will help parents have to do less support for Scholars in a full remote learning environment.

5. **Communicate more systematically and consistently about student progress:** One cornerstone of Veritas has been the frequent communication between parents and teachers. Our co-advisor model with two teachers and one classroom of Scholars allows for strong parent-teacher communication. Parents and teachers frequently text or call each other. We also have school-wide systems such as Deanslist, which allows us to send school-wide communication via email to families; POSSIP, which allows us to send short surveys to families via text; and Jumprope, which allows families to log in to see student grades. In the spring, when we quickly moved to remote learning, we did not leverage these communication systems as well as we do in person and relied more on one-to-one parent-staff communication. As we prepare to reopen remotely this fall, we are eager to better leverage these systems of communication. This is especially important for supporting Scholars with disabilities and English learners. Also, per ESE guidelines, Scholars will be graded as they would be in person rather than pass/fail, so this will make the parent portal for our gradebook and teachers' communication about Scholars' academic progress more robust.

In addition to these lessons learned above around remote learning from parent, student and staff feedback, ESE has specifically asked all schools to address the following bolded topics in their remote learning model.

Procedures for all Scholars to participate in remote learning, including a system for tracking attendance and participation

During our school closure this spring, we tracked student attendance in remote learning classes and work completion weekly beginning on March 30. Based on that data:

- 46% of Scholars completed over 80% of their work
- 21% of Scholars completed between 50 and 80% of their work
- 33% completed less than 50% of their work

We believe that it is critical to focus on student participation and engagement in the first few weeks of school in order to reset expectations from the spring. To do that we will:

- Use Deanslist to track attendance for every live Zoom class period. Parents will automatically be sent a message either via text, email, or phone if their child is not present.
- Use Deanslist to track completion of work for asynchronous/self-paced class periods. Parents will be notified by either text, email, or phone if their child has not completed work.
- Our attendance team, made up of the school culture team and our operations team, monitors and triggers our response to absences at absence number 3, 5, and 8 which include, in this order: a phone call home from a school teacher or leader, an official letter home with attendance expectations, a face-to-face meeting with a school leader and the

family, and then a referral to Saturday school or DCF. We are in the process of figuring out what remote Saturday school looks like and sounds like for absent Scholars.

Alignment of remote academic work to state standards.

Veritas has a rigorous, standards-based curriculum that we have developed over multiple years. Using two key technology tools--Nearpod and Actively Learn, we are able to digitize our program, making our materials more accessible for Scholars in both live video-based classes and for self-paced learning. In ESE’s guidance for fall remote learning, five different remote models are outlined. We will be using ESE remote model 3: combine pre-existing instructional materials with online virtual teaching materials. This model allows us to flow in and out of hybrid and full remote learning, as we described in the hybrid plan.

Below is a list of the key technology tools we are using to turn our academic program remote with a focus on single sign-in so that Scholars are not having to log into multiple systems with different passwords. Some of these tool were already being used when we were in person, and we are simply better systematizing how we use them. Some are brand new and were selected by a group of teachers and leaders this past spring and summer:

Tool	Description
Google Classroom	This is our Learning Management System (LMS), where we house all our assignments and Zoom links. We were using Google classroom across our school for ELA classes already, so transitioning to this for all subject areas was our focus this past spring. We have school-wide expectations for how to set up a Google classroom that we are implementing this fall in order to support all Scholars, especially Scholars who have executive functioning issues. Also, all of our tech platforms integrate with Google Classroom so that Scholars do not have to have logins and passwords to multiple technology platforms, but can instead just click a link within their Google Classroom.
Zoom	Zoom is a video conferencing tool. This is how Scholars at home and at school connect virtually with their peers and teachers. Zoom includes video and audio features, as well as additional features such as break out rooms, screen sharing, and a chat feature. In our teacher PD in August, we are training teachers on best teaching practices to use for Zoom. Zoom also integrates with Nearpod, a new program we are launching.
Nearpod	Nearpod is an instructional tool that can be used to both launch lessons live for a teacher to use via Zoom or to make them self-paced. The key feature of this platform is that it is interactive--Scholars have to stop and participate at different points whether the lesson is being delivered live by a teacher or whether a student is going through it self-paced. If the student is going through it self-paced, the teacher can see all of the Scholars’ responses so the teacher can monitor and give feedback on student learning. Lessons can be watched repeatedly by Scholars or

	<p>can viewed by parents. Parents asked for more tools like this so that they would be able to review lessons to better support Scholars. This is also important because if a student is absent or misses a lesson, they can launch the lesson in a self-paced way. Nearly all our classes involve Nearpod slide decks.</p>
Actively Learn	<p>Actively Learn is an an online curriculum platform where Scholars can access texts and videos across content areas. Teachers can easily digitize supports for grade-level texts and videos, allowing Scholars to access vocabulary support, read-aloud supports, and translation supports.</p>
EdLight	<p>EdLight's app lets teachers easily capture example student work during class to build a portfolio and inform their lesson planning. Scholars can submit images of their work using their Chromebooks so teachers can see the thinking Scholars are doing on paper in their notebooks or on scrap sheets of paper. This is important so that Scholars are getting some off screen, pen to paper time versus all computer time. This allows teachers to be able to see student work and respond with feedback to the class as a whole or to individual Scholars in tutoring.</p>
Edulastic	<p>Edulastic is an online quiz tool with technology-enhanced items that allows Scholars to demonstrate what they have learned. Teachers use this data to inform their planning for reteaching the whole class as needed and to support tutoring time with individual Scholars.</p>
Math Interventions	<p>Khan Academy and ST math are our two math interventions that we will use to support individual student gaps in learning. MAP Growth is a diagnostic we will use to identify what standards or domains Scholars need intervention support with, and we will use MAP Growth to monitor student progress along the way.</p>
Reading Interventions	<p>Using MAP Growth for ELA and MAP Fluency diagnostic assessments, we will determine what aspects of reading Scholars may need support with. If we determine a student needs support with decoding, we will use a combination of Phonics Blitz, a systematic phonics program that can be used both in person and online. For extreme decoding needs, Scholars will have in person or live instruction with a Wilson trained teacher. For reading fluency supports, Scholars will work either in person or live in small groups using the reading fluency materials from Student Achievement Partners. For comprehension supports, teachers will intervene using supports in Actively Learn to provide support for grade level texts using text to speech functions, vocabulary, and some translation support as needed for certain Scholars. For increasing volume of independent reading and comprehension practice, teachers will use a combination of leveled texts from NewsEla, CommonLit, and Raz Kids.</p>

Policy for issuing grades for Scholars' remote academic work

Whether Scholars are learning remotely or in the classroom, they will regularly submit work via one of the core platforms named above. Teachers will input grades for at least two assignments per class per week in our standards-based grading system JumpRope. Grade level teams work together to decide which assignments are the most important to be entered into gradebooks. JumpRope has a parent portal so that parents can stay up to date on their child's progress in relation to different learning standards. Additionally, teachers will continue to reach out to parents at minimum once every two weeks so they can be in regular contact about their child's progress.

Method for teachers and administrators to regularly communicate with Scholars' parents and guardians, including providing interpretation and translation services to limited English proficient parents and guardians.

We have several key systems for how teachers and administrators communicate with parents and guardians.

- Teachers are expected to communicate directly either via phone or text with parents and guardians about student progress at least every two weeks, and to record that communication in Deanslist. Deanslist will send alerts to administrators and teachers when a parent/guardian has not been contacted.
- Administrators can use Deanslist to communicate with parents as a group for key school-wide announcements. This can go out as either a phone call, a text, or an email. The messages are automatically translated to Spanish for parents who prefer that.
- Administrators send short surveys via text at least once a month using POSSIP in order to get parent feedback on their satisfaction with our program and to solicit feedback on what we could do to improve. This is automatically translated to Spanish for parents who prefer that.

F. Out-of-School Time Plan:

We will continue to coordinate with external partners to connect Scholars with before and after school programs as those programs figure out whether or not they are able to provide supports for families before and after school hours. Our sports and music programs that happen outside of school hours are on hold at this point in time as we try to better understand the health and safety landscape.

G. Student Supports and Professional Learning:

For all three learning model plans, the following student supports and professional learning are key:

Safety, wellness, and social emotional supports: This past spring and summer our team reevaluated all of our safety, wellness, and social emotional supports. Using the MTSS (multi-tiered systems of support) framework, our dean of culture, our director of social-emotional support, our counseling team (made up of two social workers), our grade level teacher leaders, and our school culture coordinators worked together to identify which safety, wellness, and social emotional supports we had in place when we were in school during “normal” in-person instruction and which supports we could adapt to a hybrid or remote program this fall. The adaptations for key supports for our hybrid and remote plans include:

- a modified morning routine/check-in to allow for more processing and planning for the upcoming day, especially since Scholars will be doing some self-paced work during the day
- daily, rather than weekly, SEL lesson time for all Scholars
- a revamped counselor referral system to support the increased number of Scholars needing more intensive check-ins for mental health or social emotional needs during this crisis
- increased collaboration between our counseling and culture teams to multiple times a week in order to problem solve around how to support individuals and small groups of Scholars with grief and fear around COVID-19 and to support them with the racialized trauma many Scholars are experiencing
- revised incentive systems and community celebration events
- concentrated time at the beginning of the year to learn health and safety routines and new technology routines

Planning and instruction: This spring as remote learning was happening, we studied what did and did not work in terms of planning and instruction. We compiled and synthesized some best practices for the 20-21 school year for planning and instruction in the event we would need to go remote again in some form and researched what other high-performing schools were doing to support high quality-planning and instruction for remote learning. We are implementing these supports for teachers and leaders in the coming year for lesson planning and instruction in a remote learning model:

- Training in August PD for teachers using exemplar versions of our remote lesson plans made by school leaders and teacher leaders this summer with clear, simple steps for how to “remotify” a lesson using our new and improved tech tools.
- Advice from outside partners like Achievement Network and Achieve the Core/Student Achievement Partners for our leaders around how to prioritize certain standards and learning in the upcoming year given some of the learning loss gaps this past spring.
- Use of exemplar videos of strong synchronous instruction from our internal team and from others, as well as practice time for teachers so they can get better at their craft.
- On-going coaching from school leaders, including classroom observations, group PD, and collaborative team planning times throughout the year to support remote and/or hybrid instruction.

- Purchase of ready-made, high-quality lessons plans and instructional tools to support teachers in tutoring and delivering lessons in the event of teacher illness or family emergencies.
- PD for teachers around how to support Scholars socially and emotionally in this pandemic and in this time of heightened racialized trauma.

Assessment: In order to shore up our normal assessment plan, which includes in-common unit assessments at each grade level and quarterly interim assessments, we have added MAP growth assessments to help us diagnose student needs faster at the beginning of the year and to monitor student growth across the year. This is an assessment we can administer whether Scholars are remote or in person.

Intervention: Our academic team reevaluated our tiered system of academic supports this spring, and as a part of our investigation into technology tools, we added tools that would help us support our most struggling learners in both a remote environment and in-person environment. For math interventions, our focus is on providing all Scholars with MAP Accelerator, which uses MAP growth assessment to match Scholars with certain lessons in Khan Academy to supplement their individualized math needs. Another math intervention we purchased was ST math. We are using this program with our bottom quartile of Scholars who need additional math support. For reading, MAP reading fluency test helps us to understand which Scholars need more support with the foundations of reading. This data will inform our different reading interventions that are outlined above. We selected interventions based on both their ease of use between remote and in person environments, our team's prior experiences with them, and the research base behind them. For Scholars with decoding needs, we will use Phonics Blitz or Wilson. For Scholars with reading fluency needs, we will use reading fluency resources from Achieve the Core/Student Achievement Partners. For increasing the volume and comprehension of independent reading, we will use a combination of Raz Kids, CommonLit, and NewsEla which have leveled texts. To support and intervene around access to grade level texts, Actively Learn allows us to provide interventions for struggling readers by providing text to speech, vocabulary, and some translation supports for grade level texts.

A school calendar with start date and PD days: We have revised our school calendar to allow for more teacher professional development time at the start of the school year so that teachers can learn the new routines for remotifying our standards-based curriculum, for learning new tech tools so that they can confidently teach Scholars how to use them, and for internalizing health and safety routines (masks, hand-washing, cohorts, cleaning procedures, etc.) in order to be ready to transition in and out of hybrid or in person learning as needed during the year. In our normal in-person school environment, we have a half day on Fridays for Scholars so that teachers have professional development in the afternoons. In both our remote and hybrid learning models, we propose to have our half days on Wednesdays instead of Fridays. For the hybrid model, we need the half day to be Wednesdays so that we can do a deep clean of the building to follow health and safety guidelines around how to clean the building between different cohorts of Scholars. To maintain a seamless flow between remote and hybrid in the event that we go hybrid or in-person, we are recommending that even in a remote model, Wednesday afternoons are set aside for teacher professional development. We



will reevaluate our school calendar at the end of the trimester to determine whether we will keep our previously scheduled PD days for later in the year or adjust where they fall in the calendar based on need.



Veritas Prep Charter School | 2020-2021 CALENDAR

Aug. 3 – 19 School Closed
Teacher PD Days

AUGUST 2020						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

August School Days: 8

Sep. 7 School Closed
Labor Day
Sep. 15 First Day of School
1:00 Dismissal

SEPTEMBER 2020						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

September School Days: 21

Oct. 2 T1 Progress Reports
Sent Home
Oct. 6 Picture Day
Oct. 12 School Closed
Columbus Day

OCTOBER 2020						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

October School Days: 21

Nov. 3 School Closed
Professional Development
Nov. 13 Report Card Conferences
Nov. 11 School Closed
Veteran's Day
Nov. 25-27 School Closed
Thanksgiving Break
Nov. 30 School Resumes

NOVEMBER 2020						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

November School Days: 16

Dec. 9 1:00 Dismissal
Teacher Development
Dec. 23-31 School Closed
December Break

DECEMBER 2020						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

December School Days: 15

Jan. 1 School Closed
New Year's Day
Jan. 4 School Resumes
Jan. 6 School Closed
Teach PD Day
Jan. 15 T2 Progress Reports
Sent Home
Jan. 18 School Closed
MLK Jr. Day

JANUARY 2021						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

January School Days: 18

FEBRUARY 2021						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28						

Feb. 15-19 School Closed
February Break
Feb. 22 School Resumes

February School Days: 15

MARCH 2021						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

Mar. 12 School Closed
Report Card Conferences
Mar. 24 1:00 Dismissal
Teacher Development

March School Days: 22

APRIL 2021						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

Apr. 2 School Closed
Good Friday
Apr. 19-23 School Closed
April Break
Apr. 26 School Resumes

April School Days: 16

MAY 2021						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

May 7 T3 Progress Reports
Sent Home
May 31 No School
Memorial Day

May School Days: 20

JUNE 2021						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

June 24 *Tentative Last Day of School
June 25 Final Report Cards
Sent Home

June School Days: 18

SCHOOL HOURS

Mon-Tue, Thur-Fri

Breakfast & Arrival

7:50-8:15

Instruction Begins

8:15

Dismissal

3:30

REMOTE INSTRUCTION

Wednesday

Purple School Closed / Half Day
Blue Significant Date
Yellow Progress Report Mailings & Report Card Conference Closures

*190 Scheduled School Days - Includes 5 Inclement Weather Days.

H. **Detailed Plan for Special Education and ELL Service Delivery:** Our student population mirrors our sending district's high needs Scholars. Given the large percentage of special education Scholars in particular (approximately 20%) and ELs (approximately 5%), we have spent a lot of time focusing on how best to ensure excellent service delivery for them in both our hybrid and remote learning plans. A combination of inclusion services using breakout rooms in Zoom and pull out small group services via Zoom are the primary delivery methods. A detailed plan for how we will support Scholars with special needs and English learners will be available on our website and is included as Appendix A.

I. **Certification of health and safety requirements:** Veritas Prep certifies that it meets all the health and safety requirements as issued by DESE. A complete description will be made available on our website and is included as Appendix B.

Appendix A: Special Education and ELL Service Delivery Plan SY20-21

Special Education and English Learner Supports and Services in the Hybrid Learning Model

The hybrid in-person/remote-learning model delivers in-person instruction at VPCS, with physical distancing and health and safety measures in place to protect students and staff, per DESE guidelines. In this model, most students will attend school in-person on two consecutive days each week, and engage in remote, synchronous learning on the other three days. Students with disabilities, and English learners who are in the beginning stages of language development will be offered in-person instruction four days each week, on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays to ensure that students have the services and support they need. All students will engage in remote learning on Wednesdays.

Most Students Participating in Hybrid Learning Model

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Group A In-Person	Group A In-Person	Teacher Planning	Group B In-Person	Group B In-Person
Group B Remote Learning	Group B Remote Learning		Group A Remote Learning	Group A Remote Learning
		Remote Learning (All Students)		

Students with Disabilities and Beginner English Learners

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Group C In-Person	Group C In-Person	Teacher Planning	Group C In-Person	Group C In-Person
			Remote Learning (All Students)	

Students Whose Parents Choose Full Remote Learning Model

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Group D Remote Learning	Group D Remote Learning	Teacher Planning	Group D Remote Learning	Group D Remote Learning
			Remote Learning (All Students)	

In-Person Learning: During in-person learning, there will be a continuum of special education and English learner services to deliver instruction in general education settings, special education settings, and ESL classroom settings. This may include additional support from a special education teacher or from an English as a second language teacher during core content classes, small group instruction, and/or instruction in special education settings as indicated on

IEPs. Because of social distancing and other safety requirements, special education students and English learners may receive some services in different ways than usual. For example, students may receive B-grid special education support services and C-grid related services remotely from within the school building via video conference to prevent the mixing of learning cohorts. Veritas Prep’s co-teaching model will support students with disabilities and English learners in accessing their push-in remote services. Veritas Prep will communicate with parents about any changes to the way IEP services or English learner support will be delivered. IEP teams will also meet to make any adjustments to services or accommodations needed. During in-person learning, students will receive:

- Direct/synchronous instruction in math and literacy
- Supervised in-person asynchronous instruction in Science and Social Studies
- Additional instruction provided for English Learners, as required
- Additional instruction and related services provided for Special Education students based on IEPs
- Daily Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) lessons

Health and Safety

All teachers will learn about the appropriate health and safety protocols during teacher professional development prior to students first day of school. Teachers will include the teaching of these protocols (masks, hand-washing, cohorts, cleaning procedures etc.) in the beginning of school orientation for all students. Special education teachers, teaching assistants, and culture team members will teach and continue to practice the health and safety protocols with students with disabilities in small groups and individually as needed. This will include the safety procedures for riding the bus to and from school.

Hybrid Schedule with Special Education and English Learner Support

In-person & Remote Learning Schedule	Supports for Students with Disabilities	Supports for Beginner English Learners
Morning Procedure	Support for executive functioning skills (i.e. organizing material, reviewing the schedule for the day, check-in with students to monitor work completion)	
Daily SEL (Synchronous)		
Problem Solving (Synchronous) ELA co-advisor supports	Remote Special Education Push-In Support	
Mask/Stretch Break		
Literature (Synchronous) Math co-advisor supports	Remote Special Education Push-In Support	In-Person and/or Remote ESL Push-In Support
Composition (Synchronous)	Remote Special Education Push-In Support	Remote ESL Push-In Support

Lunch		
Science (Asynchronous)	Remote Special Education Push-In Support	Remote ESL Push-In Support
Mask/Stretch Break		
Social Studies (Asynchronous)	Remote Special Education Push-In Support	Remote ESL Push-In Support
Slate Math (Synchronous)	Remote and/or In-Person Small-Group Math Support Provided	
Tutoring/IR/Makeup (Synchronous)	Remote and/or In-Person Small-Group Literacy Support Provided	Remote and/or In-Person Small-Group ESL Support Provided

Remote Learning within the Hybrid Model: Because our in-person hybrid model will mirror our remote model, students with disabilities and English learners whose parents choose the full-remote learning model will engage in synchronous learning that follows a similar academic learning pace as students participating in in-person learning. Students with disabilities and English learners will be able to remotely access the additional instruction and related services and supports as outlined in IEPs and state requirements, as illustrated in the hybrid schedule above.

Veritas Prep will work closely with parents and related service providers for students who have difficulty in changes in routine to help students transition back to school for whichever reopening model they will experience.

Special Education and English Learner Supports and Services in the Fully-Remote Model

In the fully-remote model, students with disabilities will be provided with synchronous learning opportunities with special education teachers and related service providers based on the services documented in their IEPs, and English learners will be provided with synchronous learning opportunities in ESL instruction based on the DESE’s recommended periods of ESL instruction for ELs.

Students with disabilities will be provided with a consistent schedule of synchronous classes, services and therapies in alignment with students’ IEPs. As indicated on students’ IEPs, special education services will be delivered remotely through the fully-remote model, and will include a continuum of services including instruction in both general education settings and special education settings such as co-teaching, small group instruction, and/or instruction in special education settings as indicated on IEPs. For example, if a student’s IEP indicated support provided in general education for mathematics, during the remote math class, a special education staff member might co-teach the session along with the general education teacher, or might work in a smaller virtual break-out room for part of the class to support a student with an IEP. If a student’s IEP indicates that mathematics instruction will be delivered in a special education setting, then the student would receive mathematics instruction provided by a special educator in a smaller virtual group setting.

English learners will also be provided with a consistent schedule of synchronous classes that include ESL instruction based on DESE's recommended periods of ESL instruction for ELs. English learners may also receive support during portions of their remote core content classes from an ESL teacher in small virtual break-out rooms.

Students and families will also be provided with a schedule of additional times that teachers will be available to provide guidance and support outside of students' synchronous learning schedules for additional academic help, progress updates, and other consultations. Some examples of the supports that special education teachers may provide during these times include:

- Reviewing online content before students engage with it
- Pre-teaching content
- Re-teaching content
- Providing instruction/support for executive functioning skills (i.e. organizing material, creating outlines, breaking down assignments, check-in with students to monitor work completion)

In each of the three learning models, the Instructional Leadership Team will collaborate with teachers to monitor students' work completion, grades, participation, and other data to identify students who need additional support. The IST and Student Support Team will pay special attention to the progress of students with disabilities, English learners, former English learners, and economically disadvantaged students.

Technology Tools

- For Student Learning

Students with disabilities and English learners will also benefit from Veritas Prep's enhanced technology tools. This spring and summer we have systematically investigated and selected a suite of technology tools that will enhance the teaching and learning experience for all students, including students with disabilities and English learners, by making read aloud supports, translation supports, and individualized tutoring more easily accessible. The technology tools we have selected also allow for teachers to track student progress and differentiate for students' needs more effectively than they could in the spring remote learning environment. Whether in person or remote, we will use these technology tools to support student learning, making it easier for students to flow back and forth between an in person environment or a remote environment. These technology tools are described in more detail within the "Systematic technology and materials support" portion of Section D of the Hybrid Learning Plan.

- For Progress Monitoring/Parent Communication

Veritas Prep understands that parent communication about students' progress is especially important in a remote or hybrid learning model. Veritas Prep will use technology tools to help accomplish this including: Deanslist, which allows us to send school-wide communication via email and text message to families; POSSIP, which allows us to send short surveys to families via text; and Jumprope, which allows families to log in to see student grades. In addition, Special education teachers at Veritas Prep will also use a tracker specifically for special education students that will be used to monitor students' progress based on their IEP goals and

objectives. Veritas Prep will also increase the number of progress reporting cycles in a full-remote learning model.

- For Parent Communication/Collaboration

Veritas Prep will also use technology tools to help facilitate some special education related parent communications. Veritas Prep will use Frontline Special Education and Interventions collaboration portal to securely send evaluation consent forms, IEPs, meeting invitations, meeting summaries, and other notices and documentation to families, which also allows parents and guardians to electronically sign documents and return them securely. Veritas Prep will continue using Zoom and Google Meetings to facilitate IEP meetings, parent consultations, progress monitoring updates, and other special education related conversations with parents and guardians.

Remote Learning Schedule with Special Education and English Learner Support

Minutes	Remote Learning Schedule	Supports for Students with Disabilities	Supports for Beginner English Learners
25	Morning Procedure	Support for executive functioning skills (i.e. organizing material, reviewing the schedule for the day, check-in with students to monitor work completion)	
30	Daily SEL (Synchronous)		
60	Math Problem Solving (Synchronous)	Remote Special Education Push-In Support	
15	Stretch Break		
50	Literature (Synchronous)	Remote Special Education Push-In Support	Remote ESL Push-In Support
50	Composition (Synchronous)	Remote Special Education Push-In Support	Remote ESL Push-In Support
25	Lunch		
55	Science (Asynchronous)	Remote Special Education Push-In Support	Remote ESL Push-In Support
15	Stretch Break		

45	Social Studies (Asynchronous)	Remote Special Education Push-In Support	Remote ESL Push-In Support
30	Slate Math (Synchronous)	Remote Small-Group Math Support Provided	
60	Tutoring/IR/Makeup (Synchronous)	Remote Small-Group Literacy Support Provided	Remote Small-Group ESL Support Provided

Special Education and English Learner Supports and Services in the Full In-Person Model

In our in-person model, students with disabilities will be provided with the services documented in students' IEPs, and English learners will be provided with ESL instruction based on DESE's recommended periods of ESL instruction for ELs as described in the hybrid learning model. Veritas Prep will work closely with parents and related service providers for students who have difficulty in changes in routine to help students transition back to school.

During in-person learning, there will be a continuum of special education and English learner services to deliver instruction in general education settings, special education settings, and ESL classroom settings. This may include additional support from a special education teacher or from an English as a second language teacher during core content classes, small group instruction, and/or instruction in special education settings as indicated on IEPs.

Because of social distancing and other safety requirements, special education students and English learners may receive some services in different ways than usual. For example, students may receive B-grid special education support services and C-grid related services remotely from within the school building via video conference to prevent the mixing of learning cohorts. Veritas Prep's co-teaching model will support students with disabilities and English learners in accessing their push-in remote services. Veritas Prep will communicate with parents about any changes to the way IEP services or English learner support will be delivered. IEP teams will also meet to make any adjustments to services or accommodations needed. Please see the in-person hybrid learning schedule above for more information. During in-person learning, students will receive:

- Direct/synchronous instruction in math and literacy
- Supervised asynchronous instruction in Science and Social Studies
- Additional instruction provided for English Learners, as required
- Additional instruction and related services provided for Special Education students based on IEPs
- Daily synchronous Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) lessons



Health and Safety

All teachers will learn about the appropriate health and safety protocols during teacher professional development prior to students first day of school. Teachers will include the teaching of these protocols (masks, hand-washing, cohorts, cleaning procedures etc.) in the beginning of school orientation for all students. Special education teachers, teaching assistants, and culture team members will teach and continue to practice the health and safety protocols with students with disabilities in small groups and individually as needed. This will include the safety procedures for riding the bus to and from school.

Appendix B: COVID-19 Health and Safety Protocols

COVID-19 Health Office Protocols

Our Health Office will have expanded space this year to meet COVID-19 requirements: the traditional Health Office and a new extension called the Medical Waiting Room has been built out to create a waiting room for symptomatic students. With the increased concern around COVID-19, we want to ensure that our school nurse has the time and space to take all necessary precautions and give thorough attention to students who may be experiencing symptoms. It is also extremely important to limit students' exposure to others and decrease the amount of spaces students are visiting throughout the day. To this end, we will train and support teachers to use their discretion when responding to student requests to visit the nurse to eliminate unnecessary exposure. When possible, some student issues that previously have been brought to the nurse will be handled in class or the bathroom.

Guidelines/Symptoms Requiring Absence from School

Below is a list of symptoms for which caregivers should monitor their children and staff should monitor themselves. We ask people to stay home if showing any symptoms listed below:

- Fever (100.4° Fahrenheit or higher), chills, or shaking chills
- Cough (not due to other known cause, such as chronic cough)
- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Headache *when in combination with other symptoms*
- Muscle aches or body aches
- Nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea
- Fatigue, when in combination with other symptoms
- Nasal congestion or runny nose (not due to other known causes, such as allergies) *when in combination with other symptoms*

If staff, scholars, or a member in your household present with any of the above listed symptoms, follow up with a medical provider and follow our state and federal guidelines on self-quarantining, at the direction of your medical provider, prior to returning to school. For any extended absence, a clearance note from your medical provider needs to be presented to the school nurse prior to returning to school.

- The following link from MA DPH has the most current COVID-19 testing sites in Massachusetts: <https://www.mass.gov/doc/ma-covid-19-testing-sites/download>
- Telehealth visits and telephone calls to your medical provider are encouraged if clinically stable and appropriate at time of assessment to prevent potential community transmission of infectious disease.
- If a staff, scholar, or member in your household have traveled outside the U.S. in the last 30 days or elsewhere in the U.S. in the past 21 days they should stay home and follow the latest state and CDC guidelines on self-quarantining.
- Stay home for the first 24 hours from the start of various antibiotic treatments for conditions such as strep throat, pink eye, etc.

- Stay home and consult your medical provider for undiagnosed, new and/or untreated rash or skin conditions such as, but not limited to, generalized hives, wound with purulent drainage, etc.
- Medical provider note requiring an individualized plan of care as needed.

Scholars, faculty, and staff are highly encouraged to stay home if they are sick. If anyone presents to school with any of the above-mentioned “Guidelines/Symptoms Requiring Absence from School,” they will be placed in the Medical Waiting Room, family/caregiver will be notified, and the scholar must be picked up in a timely manner. Siblings living in the same household will be dismissed at that time as well. The scholar will not be allowed to go home on the school bus with other students. A surgical mask and face shield will be worn by any scholar once they enter the medical waiting room. Scholars and their siblings will remain absent from in-school learning until clearance criteria for return to school is met. Remote learning will be available and highly encouraged during this time.

- Required PPE for nurse and staff covering the medical waiting room: KN95 (or N95) mask, face shield or goggles, gown, gloves
- All staff will be trained in putting on and removing PPE

Scholars, educators, and other staff who are at higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19 will want to consult with their health care providers about whether and under what circumstances a return to in-person school settings would be medically inadvisable.

When to Return to School Following Absence Due to Illness

- According to Massachusetts Department of Education and CDC guidance: Student/staff will need to stay home for at least 3 days without a fever (and without any fever-reducing medications like Tylenol), experience improvement in other symptoms (for example, their cough has gotten much better), and it has been at least 10 days since the onset of symptoms.
- Students or staff who have tested positive for COVID-19 should self-isolate for a minimum of 10 days and until at least three days have passed with no fever (and without any fever-reducing medications like Tylenol) and improvement in other symptoms as stated above. Prior to returning, the student/staff member must provide the nurse with documentation that they have received clearance from public health authority contact tracers (the local board of health or Community Tracing Collaborative) and medical provider.
- If the COVID-19 test is negative, the student/staff can return to school once asymptomatic for 24 hours.
- An extensive report with protocols for responding to COVID-19 scenarios in school, on the bus, or in community settings was distributed by DESE on 7-17-20. Please refer to the Quick reference sheet: Key actions for individual COVID-19 events in the reference section of this document.

When to Send a Scholar to the School Nurse/Health Office

- **Always Use Discretion.** If you feel that a scholar needs nursing assessment, you should always send them to the Health Office. The point of these norms is to help reduce Health Office visits for students who see this time as a break from class, keep track of which kids are asking frequently, and limit Health Office visits for those scholars

who appear to visit often for non-medical issues. The nurse will help track this too and follow up with scholars' teachers and family as needed.

- **If there is an emergency, 911 should NEVER be delayed.** Activate EMS, call for school nurse and administration, and delegate as appropriate until help arrives.
- **Asthma, difficulty breathing, bee sting, vomiting, head injury, diabetic issues and/or concerns, potential food allergy, bleeding that doesn't stop when pressure is applied, seizure, and significant physical injury related:** Always send a scholar to the Health Office for nurse assessment. Depending on severity of symptoms, the student may need to be escorted to the Health Office or the nurse may need to be called to the scene for assessment.
- **Stomach/Headache:** At times, these symptoms can be related to skipping a meal and/or lack of hydration. Have the scholar go to the bathroom and/or get water and snack first. Send to the Health Office if the issue persists, the scholar appears ill, or the scholar says that they feel like throwing up.
- **Minor scrapes and cuts:** Have the scholar go to the bathroom and wash with soap and water if able to do so independently and give a Band-Aid in the classroom if needed. Send to the Health Office if the wound is dirty, bleeding persists, and/or injury caused swelling or bruising.
- **Nosebleeds:** The sight of blood can be alarming for some people. Encourage the scholar to relax and provide reassurance. Instruct the scholar to sit upright and lean their body and head slightly **forward**. Instruct the scholar to pinch their nose. Once the nosebleed has subsided, provide time for the scholar to wash hands and face with soap and water. Teachers should send scholars to the nurse for persistent nose bleeds or those lasting more than a minute.
- **Always use a pass:** Scholars always need a pass when they go to the nurse. The use of SmartPass will also apply to nurse visits.
- **Communication with families:** During the school day, teachers should **not** communicate with parents about health issues. The nurse will consult with the teacher on health observations of the scholar within the classroom, but ultimately, all communications should go through the nurse/Health Office, and all determinations about sending a scholar home should only be made by a school nurse.
- With the assistance of families and the school nurse, **staff must monitor themselves and students for symptoms daily.** Staff and students **must stay home if feeling unwell.**
- **General guidance/symptoms that can be managed in the classroom:** Loose tooth, chapped lips, hunger, old healing bug bites (without history of allergies). **Always use discretion:** if you feel that a scholar needs nursing assessment, you always should send them to the Health Office.

What can school staff do to protect themselves and others from getting sick with COVID-19?

School staff can take everyday preventive actions to protect themselves and others from getting sick with COVID-19:

- **Washing hands** often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until they feel dry.
- Covering coughs and sneezes with a tissue or inside of the elbow, throwing the tissue away, and then washing hands.
- Avoiding touching your eyes, nose, mouth, and cloth face covering.

- Maintaining [distance](#) of at least 6 feet from other adults, and from students when feasible.
- Mask or face covering will be required of all students and staff especially when other [social distancing](#) measures are difficult to maintain. Masks must be made with at least 2 layers of breathable material, fully cover the nose and mouth and secure under the chin, fit snugly but comfortably against the side of the face, and be secured with ties or ear loops to remain hands free at school. At this time, based on guidance from health authorities, neck gaiter, open-chin triangle bandanas, a face shield worn alone (without a mask), and face coverings containing valve, mesh material, or holes of any kind are not acceptable face coverings.
- Cleaning and disinfecting [frequently touched surfaces](#), including tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets, faucets, and sinks.
- Staying home when sick, or after being in [close contact](#) with a person with COVID-19.
- Limiting use of shared objects (e.g., gym or physical education equipment, art supplies, games) when possible, and cleaning and disinfecting these objects frequently.
- Maintaining schedules that facilitate cohorting (e.g., keeping students in class pods, staggering when students return to school facility, having the same teacher stay with the same group of students, seating assignments).
- Organizing the school schedule to utilize repurposed spaces, including outdoor spaces, to increase classroom space and facilitate social distancing.
- Staff, scholars, or members in your household should report all travel and self-quarantine as directed when traveling outside the U.S. and/or travel elsewhere within the U.S. as per Veritas Prep and current state guidelines.

At what point should schools close for in-person learning?

- The decision to close schools for in-person learning will be made together by local officials – including school administrators and public health officials — in a manner that is transparent, yet bears in mind privacy concerns for our scholars, parents, caregivers, guardians, staff, and all community members.
- In most instances, a single case of COVID-19 in a school would not warrant closing the entire school. Community spread and how much contact the person with COVID-19 had with others, as well as when such contact took place, need to be considered. These variables should also be considered when determining how long a school, or part of the school, stays closed. If the spread of SARS-CoV-2 within a school is higher than in the community, or if the school is the source of an outbreak, administrators will work with local health officials to determine if temporarily closing the school building is necessary. Students, teachers, and staff who test positive or had close contact with anyone who tested positive should be provided with guidance for when it is safe to [discontinue self-isolation](#) or end [quarantine](#).

Resources & References

The following resources helped to inform the development of the health and safety section of this reopening plan:

CDC Guidance on School Opening:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/prepare-safe-return.html>

Protocols for Responding to COVID-19 Scenarios in Schools, on the Bus, or in Community Settings: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/covid19/on-desktop/2020-0717protocols-document.docx>

Massachusetts DESE Initial Fall Reopening Guidance: <https://www.mass.gov/doc/dese-fall-reopening-guidance/download>

Asthma Care at School-Post COVID-19 Outbreak: <https://allergyasthmanetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Asthma-Care-School-Post-Outbreak.pdf>

Johns Hopkins Reopening Policy Tracker for K-12 Schools: <https://hub.jhu.edu/2020/07/09/reopening-schools-policy-tracker/>

NEASC COVID-19 Resources: <https://www.neasc.org/covid19-resources>

NASN Care of Ill Students/Staff in School Setting in Response to COVID-19: https://higherlogicdownload.s3.amazonaws.com/NASN/3870c72d-fff9-4ed7-833f-215de278d256/UploadedImages/PDFs/03182020_NASN_Considerations_for_School_Nurses_Regarding_Care_of_Students_and_Staff_that_Become_Ill_at_School_or_Arrive_Sick.pdf