



Saint Mary School Initial Fall Reopening Plans

Reopening Team Members

Msgr. Michael Rose, Pastor

Mrs. Jeannie MacDonough, Principal

Mrs. Cheryl Dolan, Assistant Principal

Mrs. Lisa Buffone, Prekindergarten Teacher

Mrs. Colleen Johnson, Grade 3 Teacher

Mr. Michael Moakley, Middle School Teacher

Mrs. Lisa Powers, School Nurse

Mr. Matt Beaton, Parent and School Board Member

Dr. Brigid Carlson, Parent and School Board Member

Final Draft, 8/8/20

A. Executive Summary

Saint Mary School, under the supervision of the Catholic Schools Office of the Diocese of Worcester and in keeping with the guidance provided by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) has created the following plan to allow for a safe in-person phased reopening of Saint Mary School beginning on September 8, 2020. **The official first day of school for all students is Monday, September 14, 2020. Preschool's two-day program will begin on Tuesday, September 15, 2020.**

DESE has required that public schools submit a plan for the three different models of learning: in-person instruction, hybrid instruction, and full remote learning. Although this guidance does not apply to private schools, the Catholic Schools Office of the Diocese of Worcester is asking all of its Catholic Schools to follow the same guidance and mandates from DESE in regards to school reopening. Saint Mary School has created a plan for each of these models of learning and has submitted them to the Diocese. Our superintendent, Dr. Perda, will then submit these plans to the state for approval.

The plan was developed by a committee of stakeholders including parents, faculty and staff using information gathered from our survey, the guidance from the Department of Public Health and DESE, and the experiential knowledge of the committee. In keeping with the recommendations from DESE and the directives of the Superintendent of the Diocese of Worcester, the committee prioritized in-person instruction in our planning. A feasibility study was conducted of all available space along with a review of our current enrollment numbers for 2020-2021. The plan was created to facilitate a safe reopening of Saint Mary School beginning with a phased orientation period on September 8, 2020, with the first full-day for all students on September 14, 2020. A schedule for the week of September 8th is being created. Our primary goal in resuming in-person instruction is to safely and responsibly provide quality instruction in a faith-filled environment, while meeting all mandates from the DESE for a safe reopening. As directed by DESE, the committee also prepared models for hybrid and fully-remote instruction in the event that circumstances change necessitating a shift in models during the course of the year.

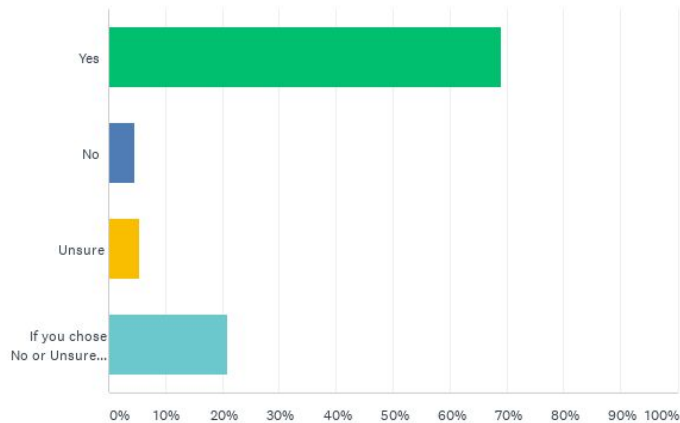
It is important for our community to recognize the fluidity of these plans, as we will need to continually update them in response to changing guidance from DESE and the Department of Public Health, as well as the changes in statistics on coronavirus both locally in Shrewsbury and state-wide.

A survey of parents, faculty, and staff was sent out the week of July 20th to solicit their thoughts regarding the following issues: comfort level on the return to school, preferred learning model for the fall, proposed schedule options for a hybrid learning model, distance learning procedures used in the spring, and the use of bus transportation, the hot lunch program and the after school program. Our invested school community responded promptly and their feedback allowed the Reentry Team to recognize that a majority of parents, faculty and staff would like to see

students return to the classroom if all suggested guidelines for safety can effectively be put in place.

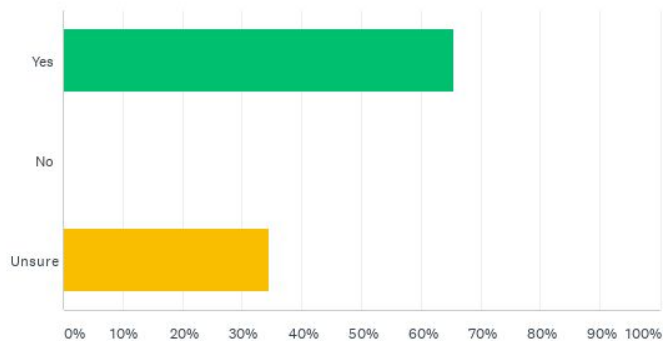
Survey of Kindergarten - Grade 8 families:

Q4 If school reopens in an in-person model with all students in accordance with the state guidance, would you send your child to school? If you answer no or unsure, please explain in the comment box.



Survey of Preschool and Pre-Kindergarten families:

Q4 If school opens in an in-person model with all students based upon the state guidance, would you send your child to school?



The survey also helped us to recognize that a percentage of our parent population has reservations about having their children return to school, prompting us to carefully consider our approach to remote learning for those students who will be learning from home this year if we open in an in-person or hybrid model. With the understanding that there is no one model that will meet the needs of our school community during this pandemic, to the best of our ability we

constructed each of the three plans keeping in mind the needs of our various constituents while supporting student learning in all contexts.

As a child-centered environment, we know the enormous responsibility we share with parents in ensuring the safety and social-emotional well-being of our students. We pray that God will guide us during each step of the safe and healthy return of students, families, faculty, and staff to Saint Mary School.

B. Letter from Superintendent

August 10, 2020

Dear parents and guardians,

With the start of the school year soon approaching, Catholic schools in the Diocese of Worcester have been working fervently to develop plans for reopening.

Across the Diocese, Catholic school leaders have spent the summer months carefully reviewing Massachusetts Department of Education (DESE) COVID guidance in safeguarding the well-being of students and staff alike this 2020-2021 academic year. The DESE guidance is based upon statewide data as gathered by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH), the Governor's Office, national public health agencies such as Centers for Disease Control (CDC), and the Massachusetts chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics. This guidance has made for a trusted source of information on procedures and practices in mitigating the spread of COVID-19, and safely operating schools within the Commonwealth at this phase of the pandemic.

Earlier this summer, each Catholic school leader in the Diocese was given the responsibility of developing various alternatives for reopening this fall. From the start, the health and safety of students and staff has been paramount. Informed by the American Academy of Pediatrics which advocates for an in-person educational setting, our Catholic schools have worked towards this goal. Health experts and laypersons mutually agree on the holistic benefits of in-person education. Still, we likewise understand that effective school community responses to COVID necessitate locally contextualized, data-informed, and adaptive educational approaches.

Today we release the latest version of school reopening plans for your review. The plan developed for your child's school intentionally includes different learning models that will allow for ease in transitioning to another mode of learning should local or regional COVID-19 concerns require doing so. Since no two schools are alike in all things, each school has conducted reviews of facilities, developed new protocols and procedures based on the DESE guidance for mitigating the risk of COVID transmission, and are actively coordinating professional development training and school education programs to make sure stakeholders understand the expectations around new health and safety requirements. As such, each reopening plan is tailored to the individual environments in which your

children are educated. Please understand that plans may need to be amended as additional knowledge and guidance is received.

It is important that you understand fully the plan that will be implemented at your child's school. If you have questions, I encourage you to contact your child's principal. I would also be happy to answer any general questions that you may have. I may be reached via email at dperda@worcesterdiocese.org or by telephone at 774-764-1019.

All God's Blessings,

David Perda, Ph.D.

Superintendent of Schools

C. In-Person Learning Model

In this model, all students are permitted to return to school for in-person instruction. The school will also provide a distance learning option for those families who are not ready to send their child/ren back to school in-person in September.

Modifications to and use of the School Environment

- Enrollment is capped in each classroom based on the square footage of the room so that students in all grades will be able to return for in-person instruction.
- External facility spaces will be repurposed if necessary.
- Teachers will be encouraged to take classes outdoors when weather permits. The possibility of purchasing/renting tents is being investigated to encourage increased outdoor time for students.
- Addition of touchless paper towel dispensers in all bathrooms used by students
- Although the state has set the requirement for spacing at three feet from seat edge to seat edge, spacing at Saint Mary School will be maintained at no less than four feet in any classroom. Removal of extra furniture from classrooms will allow for 4 feet of spacing between desks, all facing the same direction with a buffer between students and teacher.
- Removal of hard to clean objects from individual classrooms
- Water bubblers have been refitted to allow for the refilling of water bottles only.
- Establish a Medical Waiting Room for students or staff who experience COVID-19 symptoms.
- Addition of hand sanitizing stations at the end of each hallway
- Addition of hand sanitizer dispensers around the building - at entrance, outside bathrooms, at entrance to cafeteria, etc.
- Air purifiers added in each classroom
- Plexiglass barrier set up in the school office area
- Classroom windows and doors will remain open as much as possible.
- Display visual cues and posters to communicate safety protocols, especially for younger students
- A “no visitors” sign will be posted at all entrances.

Health and Safety Protocols

- Designated the school nurse as the point person (Elizabeth Powers, elizabeth.powers@stmarysparish.org) to notify if there are any suspected COVID-19 symptoms. Saint Mary School will follow DESE protocols for responding to COVID-19 scenarios which are linked [here](#).
- All Massachusetts guidelines related to out of state travel and resulting quarantine requirements must be followed.
- Staff and students with the assistance of families, must monitor themselves daily for symptoms. Staff and students must stay home if unwell. Please note that some symptoms of COVID-19 are the same as the flu or a bad cold; please do not assume it is another

condition. When in doubt, stay home. Please stay home if you have any of the symptoms listed:

- Fever (100 degrees Fahrenheit or higher) or 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 or students have any of the above symptoms, they must get a test for active COVID-19 infection prior to returning to school. (see link to protocols for possible COVID-19 scenarios above)
 - ParentsWeb email will be used to communicate with all families, students, teachers and staff key messages related to COVID-19.
 - Staff and students will participate in training on new protocols (wearing and safely storing masks, physical distancing, new lunch/recess policies, no sharing of belongings, sanitization procedures, general hygiene practices, COVID-19 symptom identification, etc)
 - Masks that adequately cover the nose and mouth are mandatory for all staff and students in Grades 2 and up.
 - Masks or face shields are ***strongly encouraged*** for students in Preschool through Grade 1 while in the classroom. Students in Preschool through Grade 1 are ***required*** to bring a mask to school to use in the event that physical distancing is not possible (entering and leaving the building, traveling through the hallway, etc.).
 - Masks should be provided by the families, and should be washed daily. Students need to provide their own masks and they should be labeled in some way if they are not easily identified by the child. An additional mask from home should be kept in each student's backpack as a back up.
 - Disposable masks will be available for any child who forgets to bring one to school.
 - Mask breaks will be given at appropriate intervals throughout the day.
 - Physical distancing of at least 3 feet, with 6 feet required when no mask is being worn. (lunch, mask breaks)
 - Arrival and dismissal procedures will be revised to allow for more distancing between students in the hallways.
 - Bathroom visits will be scheduled by class to limit the number of students in the bathroom at one time.
 - Extra recess time will be scheduled by cohort for increased opportunities for mask breaks. Accommodations will be made to provide mask breaks on days when the weather does not permit the students to go outside by utilizing alternative facility spaces.

- Social distancing practices will be enforced during recess since we are using this as a mask-free time.
- Hot lunch will be available beginning on September 14, 2020. Online orders for the hot lunch program will be due by September 1, 2020 and the deadline will be strictly adhered to. More information will be sent out in the coming weeks.
- Cohorts will be assigned to the same lunch period with assigned seating and 6 feet of separation as masks will not be worn.
- The number of lunch periods will be increased to reduce capacity of students in the lunchroom. The lunch periods will be staggered to allow for time to disinfect and sanitize surfaces before the next cohort arrives for lunch.
- The distribution of hot lunch meals, utensils and condiments will be revised.
- Increased daily cleaning and disinfecting protocols - furniture and desks, electronics, high touch areas, shared spaces, etc
- No outside visitors or volunteers will be allowed unless authorized by the principal and a log will be maintained.
- Parents will be encouraged to communicate with the office via phone or email, rather than in person.

Delivery of Instruction and Student Learning

- Students will be assigned into cohorts for lunch and recess that will minimize exposure to larger groups of students.
- Pre-kindergarten students will be their own cohort, remaining at the Alden Avenue location for the entire day.
- Students will have assigned seating in each class and during meals to help effectively create smaller groups within cohorts and help with contact tracing, if necessary.
- The master schedule will be amended to allow for an additional lunch period and scheduled recess, bathroom visits, and mask breaks.
- Middle school students will not change classrooms and will remain in their homerooms for instruction.
- Teachers and specialists will be the ones to move from classroom to classroom.
- Physical Education classes held outdoors without masks can occur with 10 feet of distance. Physical education held outdoors with masks can occur with 6 feet of distance. Physical education held indoors requires masks with 6 feet of distance between individuals. Our goal is for outdoor physical education to be a mask-free opportunity.
- Music class will not include singing but focus on other areas of the music curriculum.
- Physical Education, Art, and Music lesson plans will minimize and modify shared equipment usage.
- Students should wash and sanitize hands before and after using equipment. Any equipment shared by students will be wiped down before and after each use.
- Students will have their own supplies for classroom use and will be strongly discouraged from sharing with classmates.
- Additional chromebooks have been purchased to allow for students in Grades 5 - 8 to have their own device during the school day.

- We will implement a school-wide learning management system platform (Google Classroom) that will enable self-directed study and allow teachers to assign and receive work, track progress, and provide targeted feedback and support.
- Students and staff will be trained on the common collaboration tools for face-to-face communication, document collaboration, and file sharing.

Remote Learning during In-Person Learning Model

- Family preference or the need to quarantine will enable a student to participate in the remote learning plan while the school is in the in-person learning model.
- **Parents will choose to participate in this remote learning model by completing a Parent Commitment form due to the administration by August 15th.**
- Google Classroom will be the platform for the remote learning model.
- Procedures will be in place to track student attendance and participation.
- Remote academic work will be aligned to the Saint Mary School curriculum.
- Grades will be issued for a student's remote academic work.
- Remote learning will include regular two-way communication between educators and students and their parents
- Due to privacy issues, there will be no live-streaming of classroom instruction for this model. Instead we will utilize teacher-recorded lessons and other vetted content.
- Classroom/subject teachers will plan remote instruction with vetted content, as needed. Instructional delivery will include written assignment explanations, and video/auditory recordings to best replicate the in-person classroom instruction.
- Teachers will assign individual activities and lessons to students based on the subject area's scope and sequence and the student's instructional needs.
- An additional teacher, not necessarily the homeroom teacher, will be assigned as the point person for supporting learning and facilitating communication between school and family.

Early Childhood

- Our early childhood professionals will use their creativity and expertise to adjust schedules and curriculum in such a way that effective physical distancing is maintained while children engage in age-appropriate academic and play-based activities.
- In the event that our preschool or pre-kindergarten programs shift to remote learning, the learning journey of our youngest students will continue. The teachers will provide a schedule which includes a balance of synchronous and non-synchronous learning.

Bus Transportation

- Transportation is a fee-based program for Shrewsbury residents through the Shrewsbury Public Schools and subject to their procedures and policies for the 2020-2021 school year. Registration for private school students in Shrewsbury is ongoing at this time. Click [here](#) for the information.
- All students, regardless of age, are required to wear a mask on the bus.
- Physical distancing of one per row, every other side, is required.

Uniform Policy Amendment

- To allow for increased student comfort, a more relaxed uniform policy will be implemented for the 2020-2021 school year.
- Students may wear the summer uniform until the end of October.
- Gym uniforms can be worn any day of the week, not just on gym days.
- Beginning in November, students may wear any combination of Saint Mary School approved uniform pieces with the exception of gym shorts, shorts and skorts. (for example, navy pants can be worn with the golf shirt).
- Sweaters, sweater vests, fleece vests, ties and belts are not mandatory.
- Please refer to the Parent/Student Handbook for all other uniform-related guidelines.

D. Hybrid Learning Model

In this model, students alternate between in-person learning with safety requirements and distance learning. At this time, Saint Mary School does not expect to implement a hybrid model unless the physical distancing requirements from the state were extended beyond the four feet that we can currently accommodate. The scenario below assumes that students below Grade 2 will still be allowed to be distanced three feet apart as is currently written in the guidelines in the Frequently Asked Questions document dated July 10, 2020.

Hybrid Model:

- Students in classes K - 8 will be separated into three learning groups (Hybrid Group A, Hybrid Group B, and full-time remote Group C). Once placed into cohorts, students would be assigned two days of attendance each week, either Monday/Tuesday or Thursday/Friday. Wednesdays will be dedicated to cleaning, sanitizing and disinfecting the school building, and students will engage in remote learning from home.
- The Preschool and Pre-Kindergarten schedules will not change because their programs are part-time or their capacity allows for sufficient distancing.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday AM only	Thursday	Friday
Group A	In-person learning	In-person learning	Remote learning for all groups	Remote learning	Remote learning
Group B	Remote learning	Remote learning	Remote learning for all groups	In-person learning	In-person learning
Group C*	Remote learning	Remote learning	Remote learning for all groups	Remote learning	Remote learning

**This group includes families who choose the full remote learning option and any students who are quarantined.*

As mandated by DESE, all schools must take daily attendance whether a student is in-person or remote. Attendance will be taken each morning during the whole class face-to-face meeting, and also in individual class face to face meetings. If a student is not able to participate in their remote learning schedule for a particular day due to illness or otherwise, the parents are expected to email the homeroom teacher by 9am that morning. Participation will be tracked by attendance in face-to-face meetings and through submission of student work.

In the hybrid model, both in-person and remote academic work will be aligned to the Archdiocese of Hartford Curriculum Standards.

On those days where students are physically present at school, emphasis will be placed on moving the curriculum forward via the presentation of new material. On days that the students are not in school or engaged with synchronous remote learning activities, emphasis will be placed on the completion of assignments and activities in support of the newly presented material. Time on Wednesdays will be devoted to synchronous remote learning activities, small-group teacher check-ins, office hours, and teacher planning. When students are in the school building, the hybrid model will follow all of the modifications, policies and procedures that apply to the in-person model.

E. Remote Learning Model

In this model, all students will participate in remote learning as outlined in our Distance Learning Handbook which will be shared with our school community in September 2020. This handbook will clearly outline the expectations of teachers, students and parents during distance learning.

The Saint Mary School remote learning model will most closely resemble Option 3 (combine pre-existing instructional materials with online virtual teaching materials) as outlined in DESE's Remote Learning Guidance for Fall 2020, released on July 24th, 2020. Once provided, Saint Mary School will select and incorporate the virtual content and instructional materials curated by DESE that build on our current curriculum and that meet our students' specific needs.

Remote academic work will be aligned to the Archdiocese of Hartford Curriculum Standards. In this remote learning model, teachers will utilize a variety of methods to support student learning and growth that will include some video, some synchronous small group work, a check-in with a teacher, some offline work, and some online work. Our goal is for students not to be solely reliant on computers, but to engage in learning that also incorporates reading, communicating, authentic learning experiences, while also taking time to be physically active.

With regard to grading, we will still operate under a trimester system. Grades 4 - 8 will receive mid-trimester progress reports and grades PK - 8 will receive trimester report cards. Preschool will receive written progress reports twice a year. Grades will be based on participation, independent work, quizzes, tests and projects.

Although survey results indicated that parents were very pleased with the distance learning offered during the spring, we know that improvements can be made that will benefit teachers, students, and parents, with the goal of making remote learning as "user-friendly" as possible. Much of the Professional Development that we will conduct in the opening days of school will focus on teacher training on Google Classroom which will be the main platform used by grades K-8. This should result in a more streamlined approach that minimizes portals and platforms. A schedule outlining daily face-to-face meetings for each grade level will be published that will include whole group instruction, small group instruction, and special subjects. Teachers will also meet in grade level groups to share best practices for remote instruction and to discuss how to best engage students and improve the consistency of the delivery of remote instruction across all grade levels.

This section provides relevant communication methods and platforms that will be in use during a remote learning period. How we communicate with our community will be through the same channels as during regular operations:

Channel	Audience	Description and Access
Email	Faculty and Staff, parents/guardians, students	Email will be used for all major communications and announcements. Teachers may use email to communicate, although they will use other platforms to interact with their students as well.
ParentsWeb	Faculty and Staff, parents/guardians	Includes our emergency communication system; this will be used to inform our community of urgent news through automatic calls and/or text messages.
SeeSaw	Preschool, PK and K students	Seesaw will be the primary mode of content delivery for Preschool and PK.
Google GSuite for Education	Students with Parent/Guardian support as needed	Google GSuite (including Google Classroom, Gmail, docs, hangout, etc) will be the primary platform used by teachers and students in grades 1 - 8.
School Website	General public	SMS will maintain general information on its status for the community at large.
Student Logins	Students and Parents	The school will share with parents and students the logins the younger grades will need to access curricular tools and programs as appropriate, such as RazKids.

Parents have been surveyed about internet accessibility and technology needs. School-owned devices will be loaned to families upon request if their child needs it to successfully participate in our remote learning model. Students and parents will be trained on how to effectively access and use all content and technology platforms selected.

The school administration will work closely to prepare educators in collectively planning and problem-solving. Teachers and staff will be assigned to necessary instructional and support roles and will be provided job-embedded professional learning opportunities for specific staffing assignments.

Even without being present in the school building, administrators and teachers will prioritize building relationships and a sense of community during the remote learning model. Resources and instructional time will be provided to promote student and teacher well-being.

Student engagement will be achieved through the use of various modes of instruction, including enrichment, experiential learning, real-time feedback, and project-based learning. To the

greatest extent possible, opportunities for student choice will be provided. The administration will develop a support system for those students not effectively engaged in remote learning.

As mandated by DESE, all schools must take daily attendance whether a student is in person or remote. Attendance will be taken each morning during the whole-class face to face meeting, and also in individual class face-to-face meetings. If a student is not able to participate in their remote learning schedule for a particular day due to illness or otherwise, the parents are expected to email the homeroom teacher by 9am that morning. Participation will be tracked by attendance in face-to-face meetings and through submission of student work.

Google classroom will be the main platform for all students in grades K - 8 and each student will be assigned an individual google account. Training will be provided for staff, students and parents on how to navigate Google Classroom, including submission of work and receiving feedback and ensuring the uniformity of its use.

Questions About....	Contact
Classwork, assignments, or resource	Your teachers via email. All emails are listed on the Saint Mary School website.
Login/tech-related problem or issue	Technology Director - Joe Sposato joseph.sposato@stmarysparish.org
A personal, academic, or social-emotional concern	Your child's teacher, Principal or Assistant Principal Mrs. Cheryl Dolan - Assistant Principal Mrs. Jeannie MacDonough - Principal
Other non-technology issues related to remote learning	Mrs. Cheryl Dolan - Assistant Principal Mrs. Jeannie MacDonough - Principal

F. Out-of-School Time Plan

The After School Program will begin on Monday, September 14, the first official day of school. The After School Program will operate on any days that the students are in the building for full-day in-person instruction. Students will remain in their designated cohorts, and will utilize outdoor space as much as possible. Other spaces like the church hall, classrooms and gathering space will also be used. Pickup procedures will be modified to keep parents from entering the school building. Students and staff follow the same health and safety protocols used during the school day.

At this time, it is expected that all extracurricular activities will not begin at the start of the school year. This decision will be reevaluated as the school year progresses.

G. Student Supports and Professional Learning

Prior to opening, families will be contacted in order to communicate the plan and to ask families to prepare their students for a return to school that will be markedly different from past years. Parents should help instruct students on why masks are worn and the importance of following the directions of teachers as it relates to masks and distancing. Teachers will be expected to gently enforce the plan and to be vigilant about identifying students who are having difficulty adhering to the new expectations and those who may need emotional or social support. Although we do not have a school counselor, our administration, faculty and staff will work with families to address any needs and concerns.

The 2020-2021 academic calendar has been adjusted to reflect the delayed opening. A schedule for the week of September 8th is being developed and will be sent out in the coming weeks. The revised school calendar can be found [here](#).

Although our primary plan is an in-person model, we continue to prepare for the possibility of pivoting to a hybrid or remote model. Assessing student performance and areas of growth will begin with evaluation of in-class performance and administration of the NWEA MAP testing in September. Individual student performance reports help teachers to customize targeted areas for growth and remediation, assisting teachers in planning for instruction.

H. Certification of health and safety requirements:

This plan conforms to the health and safety requirements published by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education as of August 8, 2020.