

Natick School Reopening Plan, August 2020

Letter from the superintendent

The Natick School Committee approved my recommendation to start the 2020 School Year in a hybrid model. This plan has been submitted to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) for their approval.

I would like to remind the community that while we have settled on a hybrid model to begin the year, we are still awaiting significant data and direction from DESE and the state relative to virus trends and thresholds for school management. This guidance includes updates on athletics and using COVID-19 positivity rates to determine how, whether and when we might move into a full remote or full in-person learning model. We are also anticipating some guidance on COVID-19 testing for educators and students. When and if this information is received it will be incorporated into the plan.

I recognize that this plan is not perfect, nor does it meet the desire or first preference of some in our community. However, I believe based on the current landscape and data that having a cautious approach that puts the safety and well-being of our students, faculty, and staff is the right approach. The plan allows parents to opt-out of the hybrid model to a fully remote model should they choose. If the full district is eventually put in full remote learning, we will work with any family to move from homeschooling or home learning with Edgenuity remote learning program to transition to the district remote learning phase.

I would like to thank the hundreds of parents, educators, and community members who helped guide this discussion and tuned into the numerous community, staff, and student focus groups I hosted. Your questions, support, and guidance were invaluable.

Please click on the [NPS 2020 Reopening Plan](#) for full details. Again, I will remind the community that we will continually be updating this plan as guidance is received.

I will see you soon, and please stay safe and continue to #maskup while incorporating sound hygiene and physical distancing practices. It is up to the community as a whole, working together, to ensure that infection rates remain low.

Sincerely,



Anna P. Nolin, Ed. D.
Superintendent of Schools

Click here for the full [NPS 2020 Reopening Guide](#).

Executive Summary of Reopening Handbook and Plan

Overview of Learning Models

In-person learning model:

At this time, analysis by Natick principals indicate that the Natick Schools cannot accommodate a return to school with 100% of students attending for live brick-and-mortar instruction. All of our 9 principals indicated in our pressure test that to return and implement the recent guidance for 3 ft of social distancing and other safety measures did not allow us to fit all students back into school safely. Therefore, we do not feel, at this time, we can offer this option. The only way the Natick Schools would be able to return with 100% live is if the direction about 3ft of social distancing was no longer needed. Pressure test analysis available [here](#).

However, if we return to school full time and live in 20-21, Natick Public Schools has implemented the following measures which will be utilized to ensure health and safety if we ever transition back from our hybrid model of instruction to full-time attendance until this virus becomes manageable for our society.

Natick Public Schools Safety Modifications and Protocols for 2020 Hybrid and Live Reopening Models

Hybrid model means that **half the class will be physically present** each day and half the class will be learning remotely at home each day. (limit of 10-15 students in the room at any one time)

Cohorts will be established for every class, limiting the number of people that students and staff come into contact with while in school. Music, art, PE, health, technology, library are being offered remotely and one substitute will be assigned to a small group of classrooms to provide coverage and limit cross-contamination.

Masks mandatory on all, at all times, with exception of planned mask breaks where social distancing of six feet will be mandated, or if an individual is alone in a room or office. Escorted outside if refuse to wear a mask. Exempt only if medical document provided.

Social distancing of six feet will be in place.

Daily attestation from students and staff that they are symptom-free and haven't been in contact with anyone with COVID.

No visitors or volunteers in the building. Parent meetings held remotely

No lunch served or eaten in school to reduce time period for unmasked time to eat

HVAC Systems

- Thoroughly Cleaned, Planned Maintenance & Repairs, Systems to Be Engineer Reviewed
- Determine Ideal Fresh Air Intake Ratio (Already Doubled Ratio)
- Upgrade transition to MERV 13 Filters (Already Upgraded Filters to MERV 11)

Air Sanitizers for every classroom

Air Purifiers for Nurses' and Quarantine Areas

Handwashing Stations

- Touchless Faucets, Soap Dispensers, Towel Dispensers, Hand Sanitizing Stations
- Touchless Toilets and Urinals Not Required by BOH
- Doorstops so the door handle doesn't have to be touched.

- Only one person in the bathroom at a time.

Social Distancing

Room Setups - desk spacing and plexiglass on each student desk and each teacher desk plus a mobile plexiglass shield that the teacher can move around the room as needed.

Floor Signage for hallways - Directional (one-way traffic in most hallways unless 10ft wide) & distancing

Cleaning Protocols - Details [here](#)

- Daily, Nightly, Weekly- deep clean every weekend before the new cohort arrives.
- EPA & CDC Approved Chemicals
- Sanitizing Wands - with approved cleaner electrostatic disinfection every night. (not a cleaner).
- Pampers wipes to remove grease and body oil so that electrostatic cleaner can be maximally effective on student desks.
- Avoid having shared technology devices. NPS provides a dedicated device if student doesn't have one or a sanitation procedure if shared (some classes need shared devices).

Other Building Initiatives

- Canopies (like giant tents without walls) for scheduled outdoor mask breaks
- Break Areas in the building to allow 6' distancing
- Operational assessment of windows
- Bottle fillers replacing water bubblers that will be disengaged or removed.
- No shared devices (coffee pots, microwave, refrigerators)
- Staff use clean keys to access doors and keypads
- Installation of plexiglass on all desks, teaching stations and in all office spaces as added protective barrier.
- Proper PPE for staff and extra PPE for students who need it/if there are accidents or needs emergent during the school day.

However, unless we are forced to shut down completely due to an order from our local Natick Board of Health or from the Governor, Special Education and High Needs students and the children of public school educators (teachers, counselors, psychologists, social workers, related service providers) will all be able to access full time live in-person instruction at the school buildings, in the school they attend even if the district is in a hybrid learning model.

The model for special education and high needs students and the children of public school educators will be described here and will also be available in the hybrid model. While we are offering live, full-time instruction to these populations, parents are not forced to choose this option. Parents may choose the full-time Remote Learning with Edgenuity option. If they do, we will ask if they can bring their child for targeted time to receive special education services that may not be easily delivered online. If they cannot or will not, we will do our best to provide remote services. Last spring in total closure, the Natick Schools provided special education services and online virtual IEP meetings and we will continue to do so again.

[DRAFT schedules for all students in the hybrid/remote learning modes and time on learning analysis are included here.](#)

- o Special education students and teachers will be live full-time through this model and the hybrid learning model. [Here is a draft of their schedules, roles and safety procedures.](#)

Hybrid Learning Plan

In this model students will alternate between in-person and remote learning. Each school will isolate two distinct cohorts of students who attend school on different days. The district is currently developing hybrid models that take into consideration the developmental needs of students, similar schedules for all children in a family, and hybrid models throughout the region. Students with significant needs will be prioritized.

For Hybrid/Alternating cohort creation A/B sections in hybrid models will be dictated by team cohort created in spring of 2020, service needs for specialized populations will be prioritized and then family last names will be used so that families can be on the same schooling schedule. Families with differing last names will be grouped together on the same day.

Hybrid Learning, 50% attend for Alternating Weeks

This option requires dividing classes into two groups, A group and B group. When one group is in live session for a week total the other group would be at home learning remotely. This allows for time to pass for cohort attendance should we see infection trends rise (9 days absence from school including weekends). This allows for more time for student quarantining or cohort breaks if the rate of infection is speeding up, thus minimizing lost learning time. Students with disabilities, particularly preschool-age students and those with significant and complex needs, will be prioritized for continuing to receive full time in-person instruction during the this model. Integrated preschool will continue as in live-school model.

This model would require teachers to prepare lessons for students who are at home to work on independently from the learning in the classroom but time would be built into the teacher day in order to address check in needs while students are learning and studying remote. Those lessons would be connected to the content students learned the prior week when they were in live session and would be designed for small group and independent follow up work at home. Specials classes that cannot be taught live (PE, art, keyboarding or technology classes, band and chorus) live lessons would be taught remotely to the students on the at home week. Built into each day would be an time/prep opportunity for teachers to create the independent learning work and confer with students who are learning at home. The day is slightly abbreviated and lunch is served at home/via grab and take home bags if desired/needed. Draft schedules are included here: [Natick Hybrid and Remote Learning Experiences.](#)

Remote Learning Plan

All districts are required to have a plan for operating a remote learning program. The remote learning program must be available for three reasons:

1. Individual students who require or choose a remote learning option as their default program due to medical concerns or family safety choices. Serving possibly sick students symptomatic students who need a short-term remote learning option during isolation, asymptomatic students who come into contact with a COVID-19 carrier and need a short-term remote learning option during isolation, **(Learning at Home with Edgenuity Facilitated by NPS Teachers)**
2. Modified in-person learning, **(NPS Hybrid model--Alternating Week Schedule)** that allows for cohorting and reduced density of students but allows for live learning for all participating students.
3. For all students in the event of future classroom or school closures due to COVID-19 as dictated by the Governor or the local Natick Board of Health **(Full NPS District Remote Learning.** As was in place last

spring, infection rates may necessitate a return to quarantine for all with remote learning at home as the main educational program. Natick had a robust remote learning model in the prior quarantine closure period. Teachers all teach the classes they would have traditionally taught live, but remotely online. The Commissioner of Education has indicated that he will be making some mandated changes to remote learning including the amount of time on learning and the grading procedures needed during closure. We await these dictates before we can indicate whether or if our former remote learning program will need revision. We have revised our Expectations for Remote Learning to align with [DESE Remote Learning Guidance for Fall FINAL](#). Throughout the school year, we will update our [Instructional Continuity Plan](#) to reflect additional guidance from DESE as it becomes available.

Live learning for specialized learners (and possible the children of educators) will still be provided in the remote learning model if families will take advantage of those services. However, every effort will be made to provide remote services to these students if they have medical exemptions for live attendance.

[NPS Learning Expectations for Hybrid and All Remote Learning Models](#) (Includes Time On Learning Analysis which complies with the state's new revised hours for time on learning expectations). While details of the plan are spelled out in detail in the full reopening handbook, many of the same procedures and expectations we use in live school will now be enacted in hybrid and remote learning. We learned a great deal about how to design and implement remote and hybrid learning models last spring and have made our offerings more robust by incorporating the best practices of that experience.

Attendance at school in the remote model is required and teachers will take attendance in Powerschool in coordinated morning meeting in elementary school (which will be conducted by an NPS teacher), in homeroom period by middle school NPS teachers, and in the CDS block by high school teachers.

All work in all models or remote learning have been vetted, curated and prioritized to align with the Natick Schools curriculum scope and sequence which is **aligned to the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks**.

All courses and work for courses are graded and count for passing the grade or the course. All levels of classes will be assessed and graded in the manner they would be in live learning in the brick-and-mortar classroom.

Parent Communication: Remote teachers will engage parents through emails, office hours, parent meetings and through email communication. The Translation Team is a resource to ensure that all parents are able to engage with the school including providing interpretation and translation services to limited English proficient parents and guardians.

Platforms: The district has a main launch pad to which all teacher pages are linked. Teachers are required to have an LMS or a website upon which they share the resources for their classes. Technology platforms used include Seesaw, Edgenuity, Virtual High School, Google Classroom / Google Sites and Moodle. Video lessons given by NPS teachers will be conducted through Google Meet. Many other platforms are used as resources: Calkins units of Literacy Study, Zearn, Raz Kids, IXL, Math XL, Edulastic, Pear Deck and much more. Teachers use tools based on instructional need and design. All technology platforms have been vetted and tested by NPS teachers and all vendors sign a data privacy agreement with the district that complies with the district's data privacy policies.

Out-of-school time plan:

To support our students, the district will employ the following additional supports which are in draft development relative to exact operations in the district now.

- **Translation Team**—English language translators from the community and support mentors have been assigned to all English language learner families to assist with navigation of models, technology and training. These members of the translation team interface with NPS Director of ELL and central office to ensure equitable access to information.
- **Mobile Technology Team**—The NPS technology team has a mobile deployment system to support families in need of laptops, hotspots or if either is broken. They deliver materials to homes and pick up materials.
- **Virtual Help Desk –Technology**—The virtual help desk is open 8-3pm daily to assist in trouble shooting around broken technology, network, wifi, printing and streaming issues and can assist with some technology applications in concert with the technology and digital learning departments.
- **Virtual Academic Help Desk**—This group of teachers who have requested to work remotely due to medical needs, serve their duty periods by serving the district PK-12 on the academic help desk. Anytime support in academics in all subjects is available to all students in full-time remote or hybrid learning modes.
- **Virtual Medical / Nurse Consultation**—all building nurses have published online office hours for consultation with families.
- **Mobile and Drive Through Food Sources**—the Natick High School campus will continue to be the drive-through touchless food pick up for students who need food in remote learning weeks. Boston students will have food delivered to their homes via the METCO director.
- **BookMobile Access**—The Town of Natick has access to a bookmobile and will use it to get reading materials to any family who indicates they need the service.
- **Parent Academy** Support for training parents—the Natick Parent Academy trainers will pivot to focus their training efforts on helping parents support remote and hybrid learning. These trainings will be held throughout the year and will assist if the district has to move from hybrid to remote learning.
- **Parent Academy Connection Edgenuity Program**—Led by an Edgenuity Parent, this parent will assist educators assigned to Edgenuity to keep a “team” and connected feeling alive throughout the year for students who will attend school fully remotely all year. The group also serves to connect parents who are working with students on this program.
- **[William James Interface Counseling Services](#)**—This referral service is available to any student in the town of Natick. Any family whose child is suffering from mental health issues or depression can use this service to bypass long wait times for therapists to gain access to help.
- **Absent student procedures:** Administrator interventions in coordination with home visits by our School Resource Officers. Chronic attendance issues are dealt with using the same attendance procedure we have used in live learning up to and including visit to the home to consult with family about how to ensure attendance.
- **Weekend and Vacation Learning**

The district has applied for and obtained DESE grant funding to provide weekend and vacation learning experiences. Those services will be developed once the base schedule and routine for school is established and will include service to students who were not prioritized as “high needs” for live

instruction but who may be in need of additional supports (Title I students, students who demonstrate a failure to thrive in remote learning, those who may not be meeting grade level benchmarks and are involved in our RTI in-school services, and those who are struggling in any way). Modeled on our summer school program, these services will be live or virtual depending on the state of the district and region at large. Building teacher, reading and math specialists and Title I teachers will identify students through the child study process which will continue to run in both hybrid and remote learning models, will help to select students for inclusion in the programs. The proposed model is described below:

The spring closing of school due to the covid-19 pandemic was a challenge none of us were preparing for in terms of teaching and learning. With the guidance of state leaders, we created a learning program based on reteaching taught curriculum and new standards as recommended by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. It was apparent the learning conditions would impact students' ability to master some of the curriculum content during that time which directed us to develop a summer learning program that would help mitigate the gaps in learning our students developed. Now that we are upon the new school year, we recognize there may be more need to mitigate learning gaps that developed during school closure. We are preparing two options for learning loss that parents and students can consider, Natick Weekend Learning and Natick Vacation Learning. These two programs are elective programs for all students. However, students receiving enrolled in specialized programs, Title I, Special Education, English Language Acquisition may be recommended to participate to meet the needs of those students.

Parents and students may select both programs if they choose.

Option A: Weekend Learning

Option B: Vacation Learning

Option C: Weekend and Vacation Learning

Family selections will guide us to hire teacher facilitators who match the needs. For option C we will have continuity with vacation learning and weekend learning through April vacation of 2021. Once the supply and demand needs have been addressed we will send information on teacher assignments.

Resources for Weekend and Vacation Learning

K-5 Online Learning with Edgenuity

This is a program focused literacy and math, for students enrolled in grades K-5 for the 2020-2021 school year. This is a directed learning opportunity for students who experienced learning gaps as a result of closure during the 2019-2020 school year. The courses will be taught online through the Edgenuity platform and they will be facilitated by Natick teachers. Students will log into the Edgenuity platform to complete the assignments. During weekend office hours Natick teachers will be available to assist students and provide feedback on the work they have completed.

6-12 Online Learning with Edgenuity

This is a program focused on math, science, social studies, and English for our students who will enroll in grades 6-12 for the 2020-2021 school year. This is a directed learning opportunity for students who experienced learning gaps as a result of closure during the 2019-2020 school year. The courses will be taught online through the Edgenuity platform and they will be facilitated by Natick teachers. Students

will log into the Edgenuity platform to complete the assignments. During weekend office hours Natick teachers will be available to assist students and provide feedback on the work they have completed.

Curriculum

The curriculum for these courses will be adapted in the Edgenuity software to align to the academic standards prioritized by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education in the Spring of 2020. Natick curriculum leaders worked with teacher teams to identify the gaps in curriculum that needed to be addressed and they are outlined in our curriculum documents. Those standards were distributed to the community in the [Remote Learning Curriculum Report](#). Click on this link to see the specific standards that will be addressed in these courses.

Student supports and professional learning: safety, wellness, and social emotional supports

- **Academic supports WIN/RTI/Office Hours**

These support and small group instructional blocks are built into elementary, middle and high school schedules in both hybrid and remote learning times to ensure that students who may struggle in live or remote learning have personalized, goal-driven supports to guide their work and study.

- **Guidance and Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Time, CDS Blocks, Open Circle Morning meeting times**

These support and small group counseling, guidance groups and guidance curriculum typically start the school day at all levels and serve as the basis to both teach SEL curriculum and assess students for SEL status.

- [Hey NHS, Hey WMS, Hey KMS Program for secondary students.](#)

Hey NHS/WMS/KMS is a three-part program to address adolescent depression throughout the Natick Public Schools. First, this comprehensive program begins with a concentrated effort to increase mental health literacy in the school community and to prepare the community for a broad-based screening and intervention approach to the problem of youth depression/suicidal behavior. Next, all 7th, 8th, 9th and 11th grade teens at Wilson Middle School, Kennedy Middle School, and Natick High School will receive a screening for depressive symptoms and for an indication of suicidal behavior. Finally, all families will be notified regarding the outcome of their child's screen. Additionally, teens who are in need of immediate intervention will be connected with local mental health resources through [William James Interface Counseling Services](#). All referred teens will be followed with periodic assessments of symptoms and service utilization.

- [Youth Mental Health First Aid Training](#) was sponsored by our Natick 180 Substance Use Coalition of which the superintendent is a founding member. Staffers in district were trained and will train the rest of the staff in a train-the-trainer model to identify youth in crisis in the live and remote environment. Strategies for encouraging mental health are also taught. This is part of the professional development introduction to the school year.

- **Child crisis response** teams are present and trained to work in both remote and in person models.

Planning and instruction, assessment, and intervention: The Natick Public Schools is an expert in designing blended and online learning experiences to personalize learning for students. It is our “wheelhouse” so-to-speak. [MAPLE Natick Bright Spot Profile Report](#).

As a result of our work in this area, we have been featured in various journals, research studies and regularly present our work to other districts. This professional development schedule from August 5: <https://natickschoolshybridlearning.sched.com/2020-08-05/overview> and August 11: <https://natickschoolshybridlearning.sched.com/2020-08-11/overview>

Indicates the level of teacher leader expertise inherent in the district and being shared with staff at large. We had almost 100% staff attendance at these workshops. These workshops feature learning in designing remote and hybrid experiences, assessment in the remote setting and more. Intervention planning in remote and live learning looks similar to that in full live learning. Our teachers use screening tools, benchmark assessments, and common district growth and curriculum coverage assessments to guide Tier 1 and Tier 2 RTI and Title I interventions for students. Graduate classes for new staff are required prior to professional status and require training and projects in designing blended learning, in anti-bias education and in RTI designs.

In addition to the August 5 and 11 PD schedules, 10 additional days of professional development are outlined below to demonstrate how professional learning related to student supports and professional learning will be handled.

The Natick Schools will begin school with students and teachers full time on September 16 and here is the [full-year school calendar](#) for 2020-2021. At this time we are still working out details of some planned earlier transition days with grades K, 5 and 9. These transition days target those children moving to new buildings and also allow us to slowly ease into larger groups of students in the buildings and therein is part of training and increasing comfort for our staff members. The return to work (as evidenced by our own return to work) takes a few days of adjustment.

Professional Learning and Development

To prepare for reopening processes and procedures in both hybrid and remote teaching in all modes provided this year (full NPS Remote and Home Learning with Edgenuity) the following professional development will be provided for all staff in the district.

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education will provide a 5-part online module series reviewing key instructional practices, tips, and strategies for remote teaching aligned to MA curriculum frameworks in math, ELA, history/social studies, and science, and the Standards & Indicators of Effective Practice. Registration coming soon

Questions: Claire.J.Abbott@mass.gov.

Natick Schools Provided a full of day professional learning to staff broken out on August 5th and 11th. The topics are here: <https://natickschoolshybridlearning.sched.com/>. A survey of the teachers' union membership has informed the development of this PD schedule.

While still being negotiated, the plan for professional development includes the topics listed [here PD Slide Deck](#), will be delivered virtually unless noted as in person and may look something like this:

		8/26 DESE Trainings	Thursday, August 27, regularly scheduled	Friday, August 28, regularly scheduled Natick return to school day
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			<p>Natick return to school day</p> <p>Repeat of the PD offered on 8/5 and 8/11.</p> <p>Add, 3.25 hours Youth Mental Health First Aid Training Part 1</p>	<p>Online trainings typically done (conflict of interest, abuse, HR, allergy etc)</p> <p>New Title IX</p> <p>Read and download IEPs</p> <p>Remote Assessment/Pedagogy and Planning Trainings—ZEARN 1.5) and Calkins Units of Study (3hrs)</p>
<p>Monday, August 31, Regularly Scheduled Natick Innovation and Learning Summit: All Day Trainings on new SIS, Powerschool, all staff all levels.</p> <p>3.25 hours Youth Mental Health First Aid Training Part 2</p>	<p>Tuesday, September 1 DESE Trainings</p> <p>Sanitation Protocols</p> <p>Training for Edgenuity Remote Learning Assigned Teachers Schedule</p> <p>Overview Training/Special Education and Cohorting</p>	<p>Wednesday, September 2 DESE Trainings</p> <p>Edgenuity Training as a resource for all 6-12 teachers</p> <p>PLC coordination</p> <p>Classroom set up A-J</p>	<p>Thursday, September 3, DESE Trainings</p> <p>Prepping for the hybrid to possible full district remote learning transition: key considerations</p> <p>Building Principals and emergency protocols (2)</p> <p>Classroom set up K-Z</p>	<p>Friday September 4 no school</p>
<p>Monday, September 7, no School Labor Day</p>	<p>Tuesday, September 8</p> <p>PLC coordination</p> <p>Calkins Digital Units of Study Training</p>	<p>Wednesday, September 9</p> <p>Building disinfection/virtual PD</p>	<p>Thursday, September 10</p> <p>Classroom Set up K-Z</p> <p>Teacher Planning</p>	<p>Friday, September 11</p> <p>Teacher Planning</p> <p>Techniques for Coordinating Morning</p>

	Principal Faculty Meeting (2)	Classroom Set up A-J Principal Faculty Meeting (2)	Zearn Digital Math Units Training	Meetings/SEL check Ins (by level)
Monday, September 14, Cohort B arrives for mask and safety training, overview of tech and LMS. Remote week work assigned through weekend. (11:30 end time)--four periods	Tuesday, September 15 Building disinfection/virtual PD Teacher Prep (out of building)	Start School, September 16, Cohort A and full-time live students report to school for live instruction, Cohort A arrives for mask and safety training, overview of tech and LMS		

Other

At the time of writing this document, health data is positive for a hybrid return to school. Should that data change, the Natick Schools will pivot from a hybrid learning model to a fully remote one.

Also at the time of this writing, we are in negotiations with our teachers' union. Thus far, heated negotiations have occurred simply around the type of model (they push remote, we push hybrid). At this time we are agreeing to support a hybrid approach together, but will change that stance if public health data necessitates it. As a result of the time being spent debating these models, we have not negotiated the actual schedules for hybrid and remote learning. There is no agreement among us at this time. To that end, having deep experience with remote learning by our teachers prior to last spring's work, we know that we may have to layer in more teacher planning time in order to be fully remote. If that is the case, I will need to file a time on learning waiver. There is simply no way to have effective remote learning without more teacher planning and collaboration time in the virtual sphere. It is also not advisable for students to be on virtual meetings for the length of time it would required of us to be in order to make time on learning requirements. Last spring's 50% rule was perhaps too much time for non-structured learning time, but 100% TOL will need adjusting in the remote model. I cannot determine if this is true yet.

Certification of health and safety requirements:

We certify in concert with our department of public health, that Natick Schools can meet the health and safety requirements put out by DESE in its hybrid and remote learning models that have been prioritized by the school committee and the school department.