

# **Freetown-Lakeville Regional School District**

## **District Reopening Plan**



**August 10, 2020**

# 2020 FLRSD Fall Reopening Plan

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## **Superintendent's Message - Richard W Medeiros**

Dear Parents and Community Members,

I am writing with an update on our plans for the start of our 2020-21 school year in the Freetown-Lakeville Regional School District. We are scheduled to resume student learning on Tuesday, September 15, 2020. Our planning process continues to be guided by a vigilant monitoring of public health data in Massachusetts, and we are encouraged that indicators about the virus continue to move in the right direction. The Commonwealth's careful and disciplined approach has enabled our state to gradually begin reopening, in part because of strong compliance with health and safety precautions. The question now on all of our minds is how and when we apply those lessons learned to begin safely reopening our schools.

As you have heard, the Massachusetts Department of Education has directed districts to submit a plan that addresses the feasibility of three options for serving students at the start of the school year. Those options include a full return to daily, in-person attendance, a hybrid plan combining in-school learning, with some remote learning, and, finally, a 100% remote learning program. Of course, we know that under normal circumstances, students would be best served in schools every day, interacting with their peers and engaged in live classroom learning. While our educators and families worked incredibly hard last spring to implement remote learning, we know that approach presented enormous challenges, did not reach all students (particularly those with the greatest needs), and is not an adequate substitute for in-person interaction with teachers. When out of school, our students also lack access to all of the academic, mental, and physical supports that help ensure their social-emotional well-being, particularly in navigating the effects of trauma during these tremendously challenging times. Therefore, we believe our families and students deserve more than a fully remote learning plan.

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

regularly for symptoms of illness, and staying home from school when sick, among others. Our planning process includes a comprehensive set of strategies and investments to minimize the risk of transmitting the virus.

As a result, our hybrid learning plan will bring the students back into school buildings for in-person instruction in smaller, socially distanced groups on a rotating basis, combined with a robust remote learning program on the days students are not scheduled to be physically in school. This plan also enables us to bring a subset of students in greatest need of in-person instruction and support, particularly students with disabilities, back to school every day – but also in smaller, distanced settings with all other precautions in place.

We recognize that the circumstances of every family and staff member are different, and that no plan ultimately will satisfy everyone in our school community. But rest assured that we are working diligently to explore every option available to us, that we remain guided by the science to keep our students and staff safe and healthy, and that we will be prepared to make adjustments along the way if the public health conditions or other variables change over time.

As we move closer to the start of school, I am confident that we can prioritize both safety and learning as we prepare for the fall in Freetown and Lakeville.



## Executive Summary

This planning document offers a comprehensive overview of the 2020-21 Freetown-Lakeville Regional School District Fall Reopening Plan. Our district remains committed to providing a high quality education for all students in a safe environment. The detailed information contained in this document is our road map to success and includes multiple options for safe learning in our schools

The Freetown-Lakeville Regional School District comprises five schools: Apponequet Regional High School, Freetown-Lakeville Middle School, George Austin Intermediate School, Assawompset Elementary School, and Freetown Elementary School. The projected student enrollment for the 2020-21 school year is 2,842 children grades PK-12. Using the DESE space matrix and guidance, all five schools were examined by the leadership team for safe classroom capacity for all students and staff members.

In our district pressure testing, the district applied the minimum three foot social distancing and six foot social distancing parameters to establish adequate and safe spacing at each site. As a result, for a 100% in-person reopening plan it would require the minimum standard of three foot social distancing and spacing at all five schools. This includes our 23 acre three main campus schools which house grades 4-12: Apponequet Regional School, Freetown-Lakeville Middle School, and George Austin Intermediate School. In addition, our two satellite PK-3 elementary schools: Assawompset Elementary School in Lakeville and Freetown Elementary School in Freetown would meet this minimum three foot standard for all students.

Our feasibility studies also determined that using the six-foot spacing guidance from the CDC, the Freetown-Lakeville Regional School District would need to utilize a hybrid learning model where 50% of our student population could engage in on-site instruction at the same time. Detailed models and diagrams are included for each school as part of this document. The results of the feasibility studies of our facilities in concert with transportation and facility operations show the safest student learning model to begin the 2020-21 school year in Freetown-Lakeville would be the hybrid learning model.

The Freetown-Lakeville Regional School District will begin using a hybrid learning model at the Elementary, Middle School, and High School level for the start of the 2020-21 school year. Our goal remains the safe return of as many students as possible to in-person school settings, to maximize learning and address our student's holistic needs. Despite our best efforts for 100% student on-site instruction, it is clear that the safest option under the health and safety

requirements would be to utilize a hybrid model of in-person and remote learning to begin the school year.

The school district has outlined an eight week plan from September 15, 2020 through November 6, 2020 utilizing this model to provide the most appropriate and safest learning environment for our students and staff members at all grade levels. The challenges of social distancing, transportation, and common areas for facility operations led to this initial direction. The district Reopening Freeland Task Force formed prior to state guidance has played an active role to communicate and advise the leadership team in all decision making. The impressive list of local stakeholders that worked with the educators throughout the summer are included in this final plan.



## **In-Person Model**

In this model, all students and staff of the Freetown-Lakeville Regional School District will return for in-person instruction in all five school settings, modified to ensure the safe return of as many students as possible, while adhering to all safety requirements. The FLRSD, using the 3-foot spacing dimensions, may reopen with 100% of students able to attend in-person classroom instruction. This will allow the district to address the critical learning gaps that have likely widened during our school closure and summer months.

Face-to-face learning is an instructional method where course content and learning material is taught in person to a group of students. This traditional classroom experience has always been our goal for all children in Freetown and Lakeville. This model ensures a better understanding and accountability process for all staff and students at all grade levels. The social and emotional interactions and well-being of all our population is an integral part of this model and essential for future success.

Freetown and Lakeville truly benefit from three of our schools (Apponequet Regional High School, Freetown-Lakeville Middle School, and George Austin Intermediate School) being housed on our 23 acre main campus, thus allowing for the space for appropriate teaching and learning. In addition, our two satellite elementary schools (Assawompset and Freetown Elementary School) also meet necessary three foot space requirements for a safe learning experience. In order to implement and maintain the safety measure it will be essential to provide comprehensive training for all staff members and students over an extended period.

Student expectations will include the same cohort of students in the same environment for as much of the day as possible to adhere to safety guidelines and minimize contact with others. Many challenges exist within each school to address the entire school population including, bathroom facility usage, transitions, arrival and dismissal schedules, food service, and maybe most importantly, transportation of the entire school population.

Each school based Covid-19 team has submitted a plan to implement this goal but using the three foot classroom spacing requirements. The district can not accommodate transportation needs at this time for all five schools with an expected population of 2,842 students this coming year, in spite of efforts to encourage alternative travel options and waiving parking fees at the high school for the 2020-21 school year. Concerns within the community exist regarding the implementation of the three foot distancing which is less than the CDC recommended six-foot spacing of student desks for social distancing. Initial feedback from our school level team and district task force does not support three foot spacing. The district would need to receive support from families to safely transport students and the district would need to consider more buses or double runs to meet the recently released guidelines.

As with all three models, each school plan is attached providing more details inclusive of diagrams, data, and photos. At this time, the safest way to start the school year in the fall will be a hybrid model at all grade levels. The FLRSD would be positioned to move to full in-person instruction or remote learning based on the data this fall.



## Hybrid Model

In the hybrid model, the Freetown-Lakeville Regional School District will provide all students a learning environment both in-person and remotely. This option will allow us the best opportunity to bring all students back to school under the health and safety requirements in place regarding Covid-19 for the fall. In this model, the district will use six-foot spacing meeting the CDC recommended guidelines and provides both towns with many anxious families, our greatest opportunity to impact in-person as many children as possible. The hybrid model allows for continuous and uninterrupted learning at all levels.

Hybrid learning combines traditional in-person classroom instruction with remote digital learning activities. During in-person classroom time, teachers will engage the students through direct instruction, group discussion, and collaborative learning. The remote elements will include multimedia-enhanced content and channels for ongoing discussion. At all levels, the purpose of hybrid learning is to maximize the amount of in-person instruction, while minimizing the risk of spreading Covid-19 amongst the students and staff members.

As with all three models, each Covid-19 building based team led by the principal has submitted a detailed hybrid model plan for their school included in this document. Critical information about this model includes: Alignments of master schedules, implementation of a comprehensive 1:1 technology device plan, consistent professional development, additional supplies and personnel for sanitizing areas, alterations in passing times and corridor traffic flow, and signage to name just a few of the areas covered by the school communication plans to the families.

The use of this model to start the year will allow school schedules and program offerings to include specials, food service, and allow the FLRSD to operate as close to "normal" as possible and within the established safety guidelines. The recently released transportation guidelines for our busing fleet are also met as we send A-K families and L-Z families in two different cohorts on a one-week of in-person instruction and one week of remote learning instruction. All sub-separate special education programs and services would be provided continuously both weeks in-person.

The Reopening Freelake Task Force has reviewed the hybrid school calendar and this was shared at a town hall type meeting. Although the hybrid model does have the potential to be the most disruptive for families and children, our survey results (included in this plan) show both communities in Freetown and Lakeville support any safe effort to return to in-person instruction. Full remote learning remains a challenge and this hybrid coordination blends the best approach to in-person and distance learning for all of our students to begin the school year in the fall.



## Remote Model

The Freetown-Lakeville Regional School District remote model is available for individual students who cannot yet return to in-person, and for all students in the event of future classroom or school closures due to Covid-19. It is clear regardless of the model selected, remote learning and the use of technology remains a top priority for our school district. In this model we are able to continue student learning but would expect our teaching staff to report to their schools and conduct remote learning and teaching from their classrooms or offices. All staff support would also follow and adhere to these expectations unless new data supports a safer approach to instruction.

Remote learning takes place when our students and educators are joined across time and distance to learn rather than meet in a traditional classroom setting. This type of learning can occur synchronously or asynchronously and meets the needs of varying schedules and learning styles. Our remote learning model includes a wide variety of learning opportunities including: video demonstrations/lectures, audio-based demonstrations, interactive projects, phone or video calls, independent assignments, group work, online discussions and supported programs.

As stated previously, all five schools in the FLRSD have submitted school based plans that provide detailed expectations relative to grading, assessment, attendance, and schedules. The experience in the spring although increasingly effective, simply "raised the bar" for what families can expect in any remote learning experience during the 2020-21 school year. It is important to note that under all three models all students grades 4-12 will be provided with a district chromebook. In addition, the district will provide families K-3 that need access or devices and all requests with more devices assigned to children in class. Our recent survey results, along with our chromebook handbook provide us a road map for the implementation of this exciting priority for future success.

This model remains the safest model possible from a medical and scientific perspective, and it will be ready for the fall if needed in Freetown and Lakeville.



## **Out-of-School Time Plan**

The Freetown-Lakeville Extended Programs plays a critical role as school reopens and parents return to work. It is essential that Extended Programs maintain focus on ensuring that children are learning, safe, engaged and building academic, social, and emotional skills. The same type of safety protocols set by the District that children experience during the school day will be followed by the Program. Furthermore, Extended Programs will follow the federal, state and local mandates which pertain specifically to child care.

We have mapped out a variety of situations regarding reopening which are honest, realistic, creative and bold. These changes and modifications will be used for any reopening plans voted on by the Regional School Committee be it hybrid or a full return. Each school in the District will house Extended Programs in order to cut down on transportation. This is a major change but essential in order to keep children and staff as safe as possible. We will continue to socially distance and use face coverings at all times. We have increased staff to insure smaller group sizes. Additionally we will hold mandatory staff trainings to review all safety protocols that are in place. As always, the safety of children, families and staff are of utmost concern.

### **HANDWASHING AND SANITIZING**

- Upon entry into Program
- After use of the restroom
- Transition between activities
- Before and after eating
- Upon leaving the Program

### **CLEANING PROTOCOLS**

- Systematic cleaning by Staff
- Disinfect each day upon leaving all toys, sporting equipment, and games.
- Provide all purpose cleaner for all groups
- Disinfect and clean all tables and chairs before and after use.

### **GROUPS**

- Dismissed directly to designated areas
- Smaller group sizes
- Designated traffic patterns during transition
- Each group equipped with their own supplies
- Social distancing
- Emphasis on homework support

## **PARENT PICK UP AND DROP OFF**

- One parent One child
- One parent at the door at a time
- One parent at a time in building
- Social distancing
- Face mask must be used
- Staff will sign child in and out of Program

The Freetown-Lakeville Regional District will offer before and after school care through our district program on their in-person learning days in both the in-person and hybrid models.

## **Student Supports and Professional Learning**

The Freetown-Lakeville Regional School District understands the challenges that this pandemic has presented for families, and the difficulties it poses for many children. The social-emotional, health, and wellbeing of our children will remain a top priority for our staff members and school counseling teams.

In our in-person model, students with disabilities will be supported in accordance with their signed, active IEPs and following District protocols for health and safety. Upon reopening of schools, individual teams will convene to address student progress over the remote learning time and determine whether “compensatory services” are required. The district will then implement the agreed-upon compensatory service plans and document the implementation of such plans. Outstanding three year re-evaluations and initial evaluations from the school closure period will be conducted and team meetings held to determine student special education eligibility and develop IEPs as appropriate. During the initial reopening phase, all team meetings will be conducted remotely (with parent agreement) to minimize the adult footprint within each school building.

For our EL students the first 2 weeks: Focus on social and emotional health and wellbeing of students and their families. Review power standards from previous year and assess competency.

Weeks 2-4: Administer assessments to determine instructional levels. Determine grade level power standards to be addressed and the instructional materials needed for each student.

Weeks 4+: Create differentiated groupings of students based on assessment data and classroom teacher input. Working closely with the classroom teacher -- Monitor student progress in the classroom and provide necessary support and materials.

In our hybrid model, the district’s plan is to bring high needs/substantially separate students back to school, full-time. This is feasible due to the small class sizes provided by self-contained classrooms. In this situation, students would follow the in-person support/procedure noted above.

Students would receive IEP services in-person, at school, following district health and safety guidelines. For students who are not in substantially separate classrooms, the preliminary thinking is that students will be back to school “week on, week off.” During in-person instructional weeks, students with disabilities will be supported by the in-person support noted above; during remote instructional weeks, students will be supported by individual remote learning plans noted in the remote model. The district will schedule related services to occur during in-person instructional school weeks. During the initial reopening phase, all team meetings will be conducted remotely (with parent agreement) to minimize the adult footprint within each school building.

EL students will On-Site Power standards from previous grade will be assessed for proficiency level using BAS. Weak skills will be retaught through mini-lessons. Power standards from current grade level will be assessed. New skills will be taught in small group or individually with practice opportunities that address these skills during remote learning using

Remote Student practice opportunities for learned skills during on site instruction. Materials and assignments will be sent home with students that address standards being taught. Online platforms (iReady, PebbleGo, DiscoveryEd, Reading AtoZ) will be assigned based on student level of proficiency.

Once students have returned to the classroom the following week, remote learning assignments will be reviewed for mastery and new skills will be taught in small groups or individually with new materials and lessons assigned to be completed during remote learning the following week. A continuous cycle of monitoring, teaching, and reviewing will take place during the hybrid model.

In our remote school model, students with disabilities will be supported by following the same procedures and protocols that were implemented during the 2020 school closure. The district will develop individual Remote Learning Plans and communicate the plans to families. The district will create a remote online student schedule with more structure built into the remote school day, emphasizing real-time instruction to the maximum extent possible and appropriate based upon student age and development. Related services will be provided remotely through teletherapy and online practice and reinforcement videos. team meetings will be conducted remotely (with parent agreement) or parents may opt to wait until in-person instruction resumes to hold the team meeting. The district will explore safe and appropriate ways to evaluate students who are due for eligibility evaluations.

EL virtual meetings will be mandatory for ELL students during remote learning. Instruction will be based on EL proficiency levels based on ACCESS scores, iReady data and previous year's teacher input. Instructional focus will be on the four domains of language: reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Using grade level power standards, weak skills will be retaught using differentiated instruction and materials to reach proficiency.



## **Transportation - Director of Transportation - Ken Rezendes**

The Freetown-Lakeville Regional School District has incorporated the DESE guidance into transportation plans for the start of the 2020-21 school year. To date we have made changes to our starting and closing times at each of the schools with some staggered times at all levels. This includes a change to our busing of high school and middle school students together. Our Intermediate School children will have separate bus routes and adjustments have been made to our two satellite elementary schools, Assawompset and Freetown Elementary School.

Safety protocols inclusive of masks, social distancing, ventilation, and seat assignments have all been incorporated into our plans. Full in-person model transportation would require the support of the community to provide alternative options for our children to maintain appropriate bus numbers. The waiving of our parking fees at the high school level, is just one attempt by the district to support alternative and safe methods of transportation to our schools. An initial survey was distributed regarding transportation and a follow-up survey and updated bus form will be shared with all families.

At this time, we have assigned Cohort A-K and Cohort L-Z to all 24 First Student bus routes for the anticipated hybrid model start of our school year. In addition, we continue to examine safe adjustments to our pick and drop off protocols at each school. Safety and health protocols will be reviewed along with a comprehensive disinfectant and cleaning practice for the entire fleet of buses. Updated bus routes and information will be posted to our school website transportation link for all families prior to the start in September

## **Food Service- Director of Food Services - Andrea Fay**

Our Food Service Director, Andrea Fay, is working with our five school principals and her Aramark employees to provide breakfast and lunches at our schools. The in-person and hybrid model will include the use of our cafeterias and classrooms to provide a nutritious meal at all levels. The nutrition team is still working on details to provide safe alternatives and procedures at each school. This information will be shared with families prior to the start of school in the fall. The district will offer 3-pick-up day meals options for the remote model as we used in the spring and early summer. Proper sanitization and cleaning will be essential as we roll out our new food service program. Sample menus will be shared through our website for offerings as we make adjustments to the style and nature of our meal plans. The district plan to begin in a hybrid model allows us to focus on 50% of our students in-person at any one time.



## **Safety /Facilities and Operations- Director of Facilities - Greg Goodwin**

The Freetown-Lakeville Regional School District has taken many steps to provide safety measures at all five schools. The decision to begin in a hybrid model allows for additional social distancing at all levels. Purchasing an adequate three month supply of PPE, proper cleaning, maintenance of our heating, cooling, and ventilation systems, several capital project upgrades, securing additional staffing to meet the increased cleaning and disinfectant needs, are just a few of the significant activities undertaken by the school district to prepare for a safe return in the fall. All DESE guidance requirements for cleaning and maintenance will be in effect as our children and staff return to our five buildings.