



**Berlin-Boylston Regional School District
Re-Entry Plan 2.0
Presented to the School Committee
March 9, 2021**

Superintendent's Introduction to the Plan

In the past year, our school district has faced challenges to learning the likes of which we have never experienced. In March of 2020, as schools closed, none of us, staff, parents, community members, and certainly, our children, could ever imagine that we would be facing not days, weeks, or even months ahead, but more than a year of a world that turned us upside down and permeated every aspect of our lives.

It has been a trying time for all of us. The patience of many, even those who may typically have been proactive, has been worn thin. Within that time, however, we have learned more, become innovative in our approach to teaching and learning, and collectively sought to find solutions that may, in the past, have seemed insurmountable but have now become commonplace.

As we prepare for the full re-entry of our students to the Berlin-Boylston Regional School District, we continue to honor our commitment to the students, staff and families to whom we owe a promise of a safe and equitable learning environment.

It is time to come back to school. Based upon updated guidance from the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), a return to school can not only be safe, but is strongly recommended from multiple sources. We have revisited our earlier plan created in the summer of 2020 and revised the information to better reflect the current conditions within which we will need to operate to effectively return. Furthermore, we have levied the necessary fiscal and physical resources to facilitate the transition back to the classrooms.

In response to the varied perspectives presented and advocated for by numerous stakeholders, we have broken down the options from which families may choose for their children until the close of this school year. These options, which I ask you to carefully consider, provide an opportunity to safely return to school at a pace that is both manageable and flexible.

I invite you to carefully read our Re-Entry Plan 2.0 so that you are familiar with the procedures and practices that will be implemented in this phase of our full-return to school. In closing, I would like to thank you for your patience and understanding throughout the past year. There are no easy answers to “doing this right”, only “doing this” in a manner that is in the best interests of the students, families, and staff in the Berlin-Boylston Regional School District.

Respectfully,

Jeffrey T. Zanghi, Superintendent of Schools

Table of Contents

Timeline for Return	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Section 1 - Health and Safety Precautions	4
Section 2 - Learning Models (including Special Education)	9
Elementary (Berlin Memorial School/Boylston Elementary)	9
Tahanto Middle/High School	Error! Bookmark not defined.1
Special Education (All Schools): Full in-person learning based on DESE guidance (July 9,2020)	155
Section 3 - Transportation	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Section 4 - Technology	Error! Bookmark not defined.1
Section 5 - Funding	22

Timeline for Return

Goal: Elementary full return to school - Monday, April 5, 2021; Tahanto Middle/High School full return to school on Monday, April 12, 2021.

March 11th - Educators can begin registering for vaccines

March 12th - March 26th - Individual student questionnaires, asking families to select the learning model going forward, and transportation questions, will be distributed, collected and reviewed by building administrators **Questionnaires due back to schools by March 19th at midnight**.

March 22nd - April 2nd - Classroom assignments created; physical spaces reconfigured; parents notified of any changes to student classroom assignments (elementary only). Consolidated bus routes will be published for elementary students (combining cohort A and B).

Monday, April 5th - Elementary (PreK-5) students' full-return to school.

Week of April 5th - Consolidated bus routes published for Tahanto Regional Middle/High School.

Monday, April 12th - Tahanto Middle/High School Student full return to school

Section I - Health and Safety Precautions

Upon the full return of students into our schools, our approach to health and safety will continue to follow the protocols established at the beginning of the year.

- A. **PPE Supplies:** PPE for all staff includes gloves and disposable masks. Gowns and face shields/eye protection for staff who work in close proximity to students and may be potentially be exposed to bodily fluids. KN95 masks for nurses. Plexiglass dividers are in place for high traffic areas such as the main offices and cafeterias.

- B. **Training:** All staff have been trained in safety protocols and nursing staff will continue to reinforce hygiene training for students. Additional training for all students, particularly those students who have been in remote learning up until this time, will be provided within the first week of return.

- C. **Masks:** Students are expected to bring in their own masks from home. Masks should fit properly and snugly around the face and over the nose. An extra supply of masks will be kept at each school should a student need a replacement. **All** students, including preschool students, staff, and visitors to the buildings will be expected to continue to wear masks that cover their nose and mouth and to do so throughout the school day. (This includes any staff member and/or student who has received the COVID-19 vaccine or has recovered from COVID-19.) **Face shields alone are not sufficient** and require a face mask to be worn with it. Gaiters and bandanas are not allowed, nor are masks that exhibit a valve.

Masks are also required to be worn on the bus to and from school. (See the transportation guidelines). The bus driver has the right to disallow entrance to the bus if a student is not wearing a mask.

Transparent face masks are available for working with students who may require more visual cues, and will be available for Special Education staff and others as needed.

Exceptions to mask requirements must be made for those for whom it is not possible due to medical conditions, disability impact, or other health or safety factors. Appropriate medical documentation will be required by the school for any student who has a medical condition that will prevent them

from wearing a mask. Every attempt will be made to keep students with a medical condition at least six feet apart from other students.

Mask breaks will occur throughout the day. These breaks will require students to remain at approximately six feet apart during these scheduled times and in assigned locations.

D. Handwashing and Hand Sanitizing: While handwashing with soap and water is the best option, alcohol-based hand sanitizer (at least 60 percent ethanol or at least 70 percent isopropanol) may be utilized when hand washing is not feasible.

- a. **Hand Washing** - When hand washing, individuals should use soap and water to wash all surfaces of their hands for at least 20 seconds, wait for visible lather, rinse thoroughly, and dry with an individual disposable towel.
- b. **Hand sanitizing** - If handwashing is not feasible, hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent ethanol or at least 70 percent isopropyl content can be used. Hand sanitizer should be applied to all surfaces of the hands and in sufficient quantity that it takes 20 seconds of rubbing hands together for the sanitizer to dry. Hand sanitizer should be placed at key locations (e.g., building entrances, cafeteria, classrooms, outside bathrooms).
- c. Students and staff will hand wash at the following times:
 - i. upon arrival to school
 - ii. before and after eating,
 - iii. before putting on and taking off masks
 - iv. when hands become soiled
 - v. before dismissal.

E. General Cleaning and Hygiene: Constant cleaning and regular sanitization of high touch areas will take place throughout the day, such as workstations, equipment, screens, doorknobs, classroom sinks, restrooms.

- a. Keep interior doors open to minimize touching
- b. Bathroom sinks- shut down every other one if not 6' apart
- c. Drinking fountains replaced by water bottle filling stations.

- d. Elementary classrooms- students asked to wash hands again or use the hand sanitizers in the classroom after using the bathroom.
- e. Nightly spraying/disinfecting of appropriate surfaces.

F.1. Physical Distancing (Elementary) -According to DESE guidelines, a minimum physical distance of three feet will be allowed for staff, faculty and students with six feet apart when feasible. Masks will continue to be worn except for mask breaks and when eating.

- a. **Classroom and Facility configuration:** Rooms will primarily consist of student furniture that allows for maximal social distancing.
- b. **Class Assignments:** Social distancing is of the utmost importance in the classroom. As a result, students may need to be reassigned within the grade level prior to returning to school to ensure a maximum distance of separation. Principals will notify impacted families and teaching staff.

F.2. Physical Distancing (Tahanto Middle/High School)

- a. **Distancing requirements:** According to DESE guidelines, a minimum physical distance of three feet will be allowed for staff, faculty and students with six feet apart when feasible. Masks will continue to be worn except for mask breaks and when eating.
- b. **Classroom and Facility configuration:** Desks will be spaced a minimum of three feet apart and facing the same direction. Alternative spaces in the school will be repurposed to increase the amount of available space to accommodate the maximum distance possible.
- c. **Student groups:** Students in grades 6-8 will continue to travel with their assigned groups by math cohorts throughout the day. Students in grades 9-12 will continue to follow their assigned schedules. The Tahanto Regional Middle/High School schedule has been modified from a 7 period, 6-day rotating schedule to a 4 period, 2-day rotating schedule. Class times will remain 90 minutes in length for the remainder of the 2020-2021 school year.
- d. **Student transfers:** When a student transfers in from another school outside of the MA area, they must follow current MA travel restrictions between registering and starting in-person instruction.

G. Travel and Quarantine - In accordance with current MA travel restrictions, any students or staff members traveling must follow the state quarantine guidelines. More information can be found by clicking [here](#).

H. Classroom, Cafeteria and Other Spaces -

(Elementary) Additional cafeteria staff will be used in each building to cover lunches and social distancing requirements. Lunch period times will remain the same.

- I. BES students will be split into the Gym and Cafeteria at 6 feet apart.
- II. BMS students will be in the gym at 6 feet apart.
- III. TAH students will sit in designated spaces and seats in either the cafeteria or gymnasium to ensure that students are six feet apart facing the same direction. Two tents will be set up outside for use by the high school during lunches when weather allows. Space in the cafeteria will be provided for students wishing to take advantage of the school breakfast program. There will be no sharing of food.
- IV. **Main office and counseling office:** The main office has plexiglass shields installed at the front desk. Plexiglass is also placed at all desks of the counseling staff as well. Only two people will be allowed to enter the offices at one time.
- V. **Access to water:** Water bubblers will not be in use. Water bottle filling stations are located in each hallway of the middle school and high school academic wings and in multiple student-accessible locations in the elementary schools.

I. Safety Precautions Training - Training will be provided prior to a full return to include any new health and safety standards and procedures. The school nurses will provide a training refresher for all staff and students as needed, about health, safety, PPEs, hand washing, social distancing, and masks given the increased population. Signage will also be posted throughout the school on these topics.

J. COVID-19 Related Medical Waiting Room Space

In order to minimize transmission of COVID-19, each school has a medical waiting space available for students displaying COVID-19 symptoms. The space must be separate from the main nurse's office or other space where routine medical care is provided. All students and staff that are sent home with Covid-related symptoms will be asked to follow up with their physician. A negative covid test result or an alternative diagnosis from the physician will be required in order for the staff or student to return to in person learning. Should the student or staff not test or they must remain home in self-isolation for 10 days. For more details please see: <https://www.doe.mass.edu/covid19/on-desktop/protocols/>, page 8

At **Tahanto**, the nursing suite has separate exam rooms and one room with a door will be designated as the isolated waiting room. A student who shows COVID-19 symptoms during the school day will be moved to the medical waiting

room pre-designated for medically-related isolation until they can be picked up as soon as possible by a family member.

At **Berlin Memorial School**, the medical waiting room is located next to the nurse's office. A student that shows COVID-19 symptoms during the school day will stay in the medical waiting room until picked up by a parent/guardian. The parent/guardian will be asked to pull up to the front of the school and call the front desk on arrival. Their child will be escorted to the car by the school nurse.

At **Boylston Elementary School**, the medical waiting room is located in the old science lab across the hallway from the nurses office. A student that shows COVID-19 symptoms during the school day will stay in the medical waiting room until picked up by a parent/guardian. The parent/guardian will be asked to come to the back door of the school and call the nurse upon arrival. Their child will be escorted to the car by the school nurse.

K. Staff Vaccination Appointments - The District will help schedule vaccination appointments for staff that wish to participate in this option. Personal appointments may also be made individually by staff members. For staff members who are unable to get vaccinated before a full return is implemented, additional safety precautions will be considered upon request.

The District's commitment to providing opportunities for staff vaccinations will continue beyond the return date to school and throughout the remainder of the 2020-2021 school year.

L. Illness - We will continue to request that all staff and students review the [Daily Self Screening](#) checklist prior to going to school.

Section 2 - Learning Models (including Special Education)

Elementary (Berlin Memorial School/Boylston Elementary School)

Student Options for Return to School:

Model 1: Full In-Person

In this model, students will follow a full-day schedule in which they attend school in-person 5 days per week. This model will be similar in structure to the current hybrid model when in-person instruction is taking place in the buildings.

Note: As a result of the full return to school, Wednesdays will return to a full day, in-person teaching and learning day for students and staff.

Model 2: Remote/Live Streaming

In this model, students will participate through Zoom and live streaming in their classrooms, following the regular schedule of the Full-In model. This is an option made available to families who choose to keep their children at home for the remainder of the year, yet still participate as active members of their grade and class. Students will actively engage in academic activities within the content areas including assigned work both in the classroom and for homework. Students will take both mask breaks and lunch breaks at the same time as their class. Students may also transfer back into full in-person learning at any time with proper notice.

Remote students will be expected to check in with their homeroom teacher at the start of each day (8:40) and remain with them for instructional blocks.

Daily attendance for students participating in the Remote/Live Streaming option will be determined by student participation in **both** morning **and** afternoon Zoom sessions.

In the event of a return to a full-remote model due to COVID-related incidents, all students and staff in the affected classroom or building will move to a full-remote model.

Note: When families make the determination to switch models at any time, they may be reassigned to a new classroom to ensure maximum social distancing occurs in each room.

The Bridge program will no longer be offered. Families who are transitioning from the Bridge Program may choose either model available for the elementary schools.

In addition, families who switch models are not guaranteed the same teacher who was assigned to them in the fall.

Berlin Memorial School Schedule: [BMS Full In Schedule 2021](#)

Boylston Elementary School Schedule: [BES Full In Schedule 2021](#)

Student Arrival and Dismissal:

- BES will provide Before School supervision from 7:15am - 8:20am for 60 students. Drop off will be by the gym. After School supervision will also be available for up to 60 students from 3:00pm - 4:00pm. Pick up will also be by the gym. Families will be encouraged to enter into a lottery for before and after school supervision. The principal will provide a google form prior to the student return date. The before and after school sessions will be free for families for the remainder of the school year.
- BMS will provide an expanded morning drop off time from 8:00am - 8:30am and an expanded afternoon pick up time from 3:00pm - 3:30pm in order to accommodate the increased number of students being dropped off and picked up. There will be no afterschool program at BMS.

Staff Arrival and Dismissal: No changes will be made.

Social Emotional Learning:

- Upon re-entry, we will continue to utilize the Caring School Community curriculum to address student concerns. This curriculum has incorporated stress levels around the pandemic and school reentry into its programming.
- At each building, the school psychologist will be available to meet with students individually, with family members, or in whole class and small group discussions.

Teaching and Learning at BES/BMS:

DESE MCAS general participation requirements and guidelines for ELA, Mathematics and STE Grades 3-5:

- Students in grades 3-5 will be required to take one MCAS session each in the areas of ELA, Mathematics and STE (grade 5 only).

Tahanto Middle/High School

Student Options for Return to School:

Model 1: Full In-Person

In this model, students will follow a full-day schedule in which they attend school in-person 5 days per week. This model will be similar in structure to the current hybrid model when in-person instruction is taking place in the buildings.

Model 2: Remote/Live Streaming

In this model, students will participate in Google Meet and live streaming into their classrooms, following the regular schedule of the Full-In model. This is an option made available to families who choose to keep their children at home for the remainder of the year, yet still participate as active members of their grade and class. Students will actively engage in academic activities within the content areas including assigned work both in the classroom and for homework. Students will take both mask breaks and lunch breaks at the same time as their class. Students may transfer to and from remote learning and full in-person learning within the first week after the return to in-person learning begins.

Note: In the event of a return to a full-remote model due to COVID-related incidents, all students and staff in the affected classroom or building will move to a full-remote model.

Model 3: Remote/Edgenuity

This model is only available for students who are currently enrolled in the Edgenuity platform. No further entry into Edgenuity will be permitted. Students *may* exit Edgenuity to return to full in-person learning, however, seniors are strongly discouraged from doing so due to the lateness of the return in the school year. The recommendation is to remain in Edgenuity for the remainder of the year.

Teaching and Learning at Tahanto

DESE MCAS general participation requirements and guidelines for ELA, Mathematics and STE Grades 6-8, 9, 10, 11:

- Students in grades 6-8 will be required to take one session each in the areas of ELA, Mathematics and STE (grade 8 only).

- Students in grade 9 who are enrolled in Biology will be required to take the legacy MCAS test in June 2021 and must earn a passing score on the Biology test to meet their Competency Determination (CD) requirements to earn a high school diploma, in addition to meeting all local graduation requirements.
- Students in grade 10 and 11 (classes of 2022 and 2023) must earn a passing score on the ELA and mathematics tests to meet their Competency Determination (CD) requirement to earn a high school diploma, in addition to meeting all local graduation requirements.

Tahanto Regional Middle/High School Schedule: [Tahanto Full In Schedule 2021](#)

Middle School Make-Up Work Grading:

Any student who needs to make work up in must follow the following timelines in order for their make up work to be accepted:

- Grade 6: Students have until the end of the quarter to make up work
- Grade 7: Students have 1 week from the assignment due date to make up work
- Grade 8: Students have 3 school days from the assignment due date to make up work

High School Make-Up Work Grading:

- For any absences due to illness, a student is expected to have work made up within a period not longer than twice the length of the absence.
- The major responsibility lies with the student to request make-up work and to complete the work.
- For an extended illness, the school will provide assignments upon request.
- For all other excused absences not due to illness including out-of-school suspensions, a student shall have one day to complete missed assignments for each day missed.
- Work requested prior to an absence will be expected to be handed in on the day the student returns to school. (This includes work sent home during suspensions.)
- For unexcused absences, work is due the day the student returns.
- If a test or quiz was missed and the student does not have an excusal note upon return, the student will receive a zero.
- Students with extenuating circumstances should reach out to their teacher.

For consistency and ease of use for staff, students, and their families, staff and students in grades PreK-12 will utilize Google Classroom for the repository of all technology tools, platforms, etc. Administrator expectation will be that all staff use Google Classroom for this purpose. Any additional learning tools provided to students will be at

the teacher's discretion, and the links should appear within Google Classroom. All staff will utilize GOOGLE MEET and/or Zoom to meet with parents and other staff virtually.

Student Arrival and Dismissal:

Students will begin arriving at school either by bus, by parent drop-off, or by driving themselves no earlier than 7:23 am. To avoid a backup, a schedule is created that designates who is to be dropped off, the time of drop-off, and the location of drop-off. Students will have a staggered dismissal starting at 2:10 pm in the following order:

1. Seniors who drive
2. Students loading into a single bus at a time
3. Parent pick-up (Pick-up will occur from 2:15-2:30)

***Please note that upon a full return NO juniors will be allowed to drive private vehicles to school. This is due to limited student parking spaces of which are reserved for seniors.**

Entering and Exiting the Building for Staff and Students:

In an effort to minimize the number of people using the same doors, faculty and staff will enter and exit from the doorways in the hallways closest to their first and last classes. The mathematics, physical education, art, music, banking classes, and anyone needing to access the elevator, will use the main entrance. Students in grades 6 and 7 will enter the building at the side entrance and grade 8 will use the middle school entrance. Humanities will enter and exit through the science wing side doors.

Storing Supplies:

No lockers will be used. Backpacks will be placed under student desks. Students will be asked to bring only what they need for the day.

Hallway Safety:

Students will walk in hallways in one direction between classes; however, they will not need to do so if exiting a classroom during class time to use a restroom. Hallway flow will be marked with arrows. Restroom entrances will be monitored by hall monitors to ensure that overcrowding in the restrooms does not occur.

Mental Health/Social Emotional Support:

Within the first 2-3 weeks of in-person classes, Counseling staff (Adjustment Counselor, School Psychologist, and both School Counselors) will join full class meetings with each grade to remind students that they are available for support, to encourage students to reach out if in need of help, and let students know what types of resources are available to them. The Counseling staff will continue to conduct in-class lessons as scheduled

with students in grades 6-12. All staff will be asked to reach out if there are any concerns for behavior, attendance or work completion by reporting to administration. On a monthly basis during Block 8, the MindMatters group, in collaboration with the Wellness Committee, will schedule activities for students that promote social, emotional and physical wellness.

Ongoing Support:

Students will make appointments with the counseling staff via Google Meet, in-person or email. Emergency check in students will be called down. Counseling staff will provide Tier one implementation of skills and resources during classes and also small support groups for the more “in need” students to build strengths such as self awareness, advocacy and soothing techniques.

Parental support will be provided by offering resources and materials for concerns about COVID and coping strategies, as well as Health education/awareness information such as “How to’s” on how to navigate COVID concerns and minimize risks. It is very important that we emphasize parental input of correct contact information onto Powerschool on an as-needed basis to ensure that we are able to contact and disseminate information to all families successfully.

The District maintains an updated list on their website of support within the District as well as within the local community. The District has also contacted community agencies who may be able to provide additional support to students and families who are experiencing difficulty.

Communication with Stakeholders:

Tahanto will continue to address large group events and activities such as staff meetings, class meetings, larger extra curricular activities, Open house, etc. virtually for safety purposes. All meetings will be scheduled and communicated ahead of time. Class and Parent meetings will be recorded and posted and archived on the school website as a resource for those unable to attend. Monthly virtual student class meetings with Principal, Assistant Principal, and Class advisor/Team leader will take place for each grade.

There will be continued weekly communication from the district. All weekly communication will be posted and archived on the website so that all stakeholders can retrieve information. Interpretation for parents who speak English as a second Language and/or prefer to receive information in their native language is available. Please contact the school if you need this and are not receiving translated information. The school’s student information system, Powerschool, will have contact information updated with as much contact information as possible.

Attendance:

School districts must take attendance for every student, every period at the middle/high school level, regardless of the mode of learning. **If your child is absent from school, whether your child is remote or in-person, please follow the same procedures:**

1. **Call (508)869-2333 x 2303** to report your child absent. If your child is absent due to a medical appointment (doctor or dentist), please bring a note to the main office from the doctor's office the next day your child is at Tahanto.
2. If your child is going to be late to school for either remote learning or in-person please still call the above number and make us aware of this. **Remote attendance will be taken within the first 5 minutes of class.**
3. Each student has 3 parental excusals per semester for absences that are not subject to a doctor's visit. For parental excusals, please write a note and have your child bring the note to the main office on the next day your child is in-person at Tahanto.
4. **If the student is scheduled to be in-person for learning, they may not choose to learn remotely unless they are not feeling well (in which case a parent would call the school nurse).**

Special Education (All Schools): Full in-person learning based on DESE guidance (*July 9,2020*).

Students will receive all services, as documented in their IEPs, through in-person services (or remote instruction if the family has chosen remote services) while abiding by the current health and safety requirements. In the event the District needs to return to remote learning for any reason, students with complex and significant needs will be prioritized for in-person learning whenever possible. These students are already identified as "high needs" through the IEP process on the IEP form entitled "Primary Disability/Level of Need-PL3."

Masks:

Some students with disabilities will not be able to wear cloth face masks as frequently or at all. In order to support these students safely, the district will ensure:

- Classrooms are adequately staffed, and in accordance with licensed educator: aide ratios;

- Educators, including itinerant staff related service providers, paraprofessionals and other staff members will have available any additional protective equipment that may be needed as unexpected situations arise, such as disposable gowns, face shields, etc.

EL Students:

For limited English proficient parents and guardians of students with disabilities, the district will provide interpreters, translated special education notifications sent to families, as well as schedules, learning plans, IEPs, and Progress Reports and emails. The District will also use interpreters at IEP Team meetings. The student's liaison will be the specific contact person within the child's special education Team who will access interpreter services for all contacts if needed.

Initial Evaluations, Reevaluations and Annual IEP Team Meetings:

IEP Teams will continue to conduct annual review Team meetings as they are due, and will be scheduled as needed each week, in accordance with 603 CMR 28.04 (3). Per DESE guidance, the IEP will be developed as though the student will be attending school full time in-person. Individual COVID-19 Special Education Learning Plans will be developed if needed to reflect changes in service delivery.

Parents will be consulted about whether they would like their child's Team meeting held in-person, by video conferencing, or by phone. Every attempt will be made to schedule the meetings so that parents and staff feel safety is maintained and all members of the team may participate.

Staffing, Specialized Safety Supplies/Protective Equipment and Training:

For some students, staff may need to be closer than the minimum physical distancing requirements when providing instruction. Direct service providers include teachers, direct support professionals, paraprofessionals, therapists, related services personnel, school nurses, health office staff, and any other staff who must come into close contact with students with disabilities. Staff will be provided with additional safety training and appropriate PPE.

Remote Learning for Special Education Services (for families who choose to remain in remote learning):

Remote learning services will be provided through the "Instruction and Services" (e.g., structured learning time, teletherapy and video conferencing) model of service delivery. The "Resources and Supports" delivery model (Sending home packets and communicating with families) can only be used, if needed, on a temporary basis for a limited period of time (no more than two weeks), while the district shifts to "Instruction and Services" delivery model.

- All remote students will participate in assigned classes, and each school will maintain a system for tracking attendance and participation;

- Teachers, including special educators and administrators, shall regularly communicate with students' parents or guardians, including providing interpretation and translation services to limited English proficient parents and guardians.

For school year 2020-2021 Instruction and Services must include the following components:

- A regular and consistent schedule of classes, interventions, services and therapies as required by the student's IEP, offered synchronously or asynchronously;
- Structured learning time designed so that the student can access state standards;

Schools will make available computer devices and internet access if needed, as well as educator and parent training. The district will provide translations of the training if needed.

Service providers or IEP liaisons should contact the parents of their students as soon as possible to discuss how a given student's IEP services will be delivered if different than described in a student's IEP, including how and where special education services will be provided. Using input from that discussion, teachers or liaisons must provide parents with written notification containing specific information about how IEP services will be provided if different from the IEP.

Section 3 - Transportation

The following is based on the July 22, 2020 guidance from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), and updated guidance provided by DESE on February 11, 2021.

Core health and safety practices

Several core practices will support safe school bus operations this spring:

Masks:

All staff and students on the bus, regardless of age, are required to wear masks at all times. It is the responsibility of parents/ caregivers to provide their child with a mask. The District will provide each bus with some spare masks for students who do not have a mask. Exemptions for students due to medical and/or behavioral reasons may be requested, will be reviewed, and associated protocols will be developed. Given the limits on ridership levels, DESE has encouraged districts to work with the families of students who are regularly unable to wear a mask regarding possible alternative

transportation arrangements (i.e. walking to school or the family transporting the student).

Distance:

As of February 2021, physical distancing guidelines and resulting bus capacities have been updated by the State of Massachusetts as outlined below. Districts may adopt these updated standards only when the required mitigation measures outlined in the rest of this guidance document (wearing masks, opening windows, etc.) are followed. In all cases, maximum distance between students should be maintained during boarding and transportation.

- Elementary schools: Capacity limitations and physical distancing requirements for students on buses are lifted.
- Middle and high schools: Capacity limitations and physical distancing requirements for students on buses are lifted, except for middle and high schools in districts with high community prevalence. For middle and high schools in districts with high community prevalence, capacity limitations and physical distancing requirements on buses are amended to allow 2 students per bus bench.

Ventilation:

Keep windows open at all times at least two inches during operation. In adverse weather conditions, every other window can be opened (i.e. first row windows open two inches, second row windows closed, etc.). Districts were advised to develop a rain plan to keep students dry when riding the bus in rainy conditions. The district seeks to accomplish this by:

- recommending that families send their students to the bus in full rain gear (and warmer attire, as needed) on rainy days, including hoods.
- Distributing disposable ponchos for any students who need them. The district is planning to purchase a small supply of disposable ponchos to leave on each bus in the event a student needs one on a rainy day. (both children sized for elementary students and adult sized ponchos for Tahanto students).
- To the extent that bus capacity will allow, by leaving the seats closest to open windows (every other row) empty, if feasible.

Seat assignments:

Students will be assigned to a single bus and assigned a seat, based on the order in which they get on the bus. Students that get on the bus first will be assigned to sit in the back, and additional students board the bus, they will be seated in the next available seat, driver (from back to front.)

Hand sanitizer:

A dispenser of hand sanitizer will be placed at the front of each bus, the district has provided each bus with a supply of hand sanitizer. It is recommended that students sanitize their hands on boarding and departing the bus.

Bus sanitizing / disinfecting:

Buses will regularly be cleaned and sanitized. Buses will be sanitized nightly by the district's vendor, NRT Bus. During the day, high touch areas will be cleaned and disinfected after each route using an EPA approved disinfectant.

Bus monitors:

Districts should consider adding a bus monitor (e.g., volunteer, student leader, or staff member) for every bus to ensure strict adherence to these health and safety guidelines. Berlin-Boylston is planning to do this on a limited basis, for the first three or four weeks of the full-in model, to assist students in acclimating to the new guidelines. However this is dependent on recruiting / hiring staff for these monitor positions, which are anticipated to be difficult to fill.

Bus registration:

The district is requiring that students be registered to ride the bus before they are added to the bus route, and assigned a bus stop. If your student(s) are currently riding a bus, no action is required. If you need to register, please indicate either on the parent questionnaire or by contacting the Principal's office of your student's school. This will enable the district to monitor ridership levels, and manage to the limits specified by DESE.

Bus Capacity:

Based on the revised DESE guidance, the maximum number of riders that should be permitted to ride a bus is 77 for the elementary schools (three per seat). For Tahanto, the guidelines lift capacity restrictions, unless we are in a community of high prevalence, in which case the capacity is 50 students. Practically speaking, middle-high schools students are bigger than elementary students and mostly only fit two per seat, so the district is planning on a capacity of 50 students for Tahanto buses. Based on current ridership levels, in a return to full in-person learning, the district has the capacity with its existing buses to accommodate all current riders. (see table below).

School	Bus route	Combined Ridership
Boylston Elementary	1	32
Boylston Elementary	2	35
Boylston Elementary	3	15
Boylston Elementary	5	28
Berlin Memorial	1	34
Berlin Memorial	2	29
Berlin Memorial	3	24
Tahanto MS-HS	Boyls 1	38
Tahanto MS-HS	Boyls 2	45
Tahanto MS-HS	Boyls 3	33
Tahanto MS-HS	Boyls 4	40
Tahanto MS-HS	Boyls 5	40
Tahanto MS-HS	Berl 1	34
Tahanto MS-HS	Berl 2	36
Tahanto MS-HS	Berl 3	34

Revised routes:

The district’s bus vendor will be consolidating the cohort routes into a single route for each bus. Revised routes are anticipated to be available by April 12 or sooner.

Section 4 - Technology

Technology:

Chromebooks/Mobile Technology:

For students returning to Full-in Learning: Students will continue to need/use the same mobile device they have been using during remote learning. Teachers will continue to use these devices for class work as well as for on-line testing. Students will need to bring their devices with them to school upon return. Individual devices may need to stay with the student throughout the school day as students move from room to room depending on developmental levels as needed. Also, we do not have the capacity to have each student have a device for home and one at school so if individual teachers require students to do work at home that utilizes a device then the chromebook will have to either travel with them to and from school or a family-owned device will be needed at home. At the Middle/High School whichever device is used, district-owned or family-owned, the expectation is that the device will travel between school and home daily with the student. For any students who have not been utilizing a district-owned device at home and these families do not wish for that family-owned device to travel to school they may request that a chromebook be assigned to their child.

For students remaining in Full-Remote: Students will continue to need/use the same mobile device they have been using. If a family is now in need of a district-owned device, please work with your child's principal and or the main office to request one.

Remote Students Expectations:

Middle/High School:

Remote students will be following the same daily schedule as in-person students and as such are expected to report to scheduled class on time. All students must be present throughout the entirety of the class and must have their cameras/microphones on or off as required by their teacher.

Support Questions:

Technology issues should be addressed through your child's teacher or by emailing to parentquestions@bbrsd.org.

Technology questions regarding the Edgenuity platform should be directed to Mrs. Jessica Gallagher at jgallagher@bbrsd.org.

Section 5 - Funding

Budgetary Needs

Additional resources will be needed for a return to full in-person learning. Below is a list of anticipated needs, and estimated costs.

School	Needs	Cost Estimate (April-June)
BES	Hire a special education para for a 1:1 student who has not been in the building but may be in April.	\$8,333
BES	Additional Special Education Teacher to support remote learners.	\$10,000
BES/BMS	Movers/laborers to set classrooms up (likely can be averted if done during April vacation)	tbd
BES	Additional cafeteria worker - usual staffing level for full in-person learning	\$5,400
BES	Post and hire 3 staff members for Before and After School Supervision (7:15-8:20 and 3:00-4:00).	\$2,880
ALL	Hand sanitizer (determine add'l amount based on full attendance)	\$1,500
ALL	BETCO sanitizer for cafeteria tables / desks	\$900
ALL	Webcams (25) and tripods (for live streaming to remote students)	\$5,350
BMS	(60) Desks or (30) tables for school lunch (desks used now will be returning to classrooms)	\$2,400
BMS	Increase Cafeteria aide by one hour per day to accommodate add'l meals being prepped	\$900
ALL	(40) Computer monitors (to view remote students)	\$4,000
BES	Increase P/E teacher by 0.1 FTE	\$1,807
BES	Increase Art teacher by 0.1 FTE	\$1,958
BMS	Post and hire 1 staff member for Before and After School Supervision (7:15-8:20 and 3:00-4:00).	\$1,440
ALL	Limited supply of disposable rain ponchos for school buses (based on new transportation guidelines, to drive with windows at least 2 inches open, regardless of weather)	\$160
TAH	Duty Aide: Full- day for arrival/dismissal, hallway, and lunches. This is needed for increased traffic flow, increased student population and the addition of another lunch to our schedule.	\$5,270
TAH	140 Desks or 70 tables for lunch space. (desks used now will be returning to classrooms in full-in model)	\$5,600
ALL	Bus monitors to ensure compliance with COVID transportation protocols, seat assignments, etc.	\$6,300
TAH	140 chairs if tables are used for lunch space - borrow from elementary schools	\$0
TAH	Addition of 1 cafeteria worker. No replacement was hired after recent retirement. With a full-in model, the addition of another lunch, cleaning requirements, no time in between lunches and continued remote meal.	\$5,400

Total	Subtotal - est'd incremental costs needed for return to full-in learning in 2021	\$69,598
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