

# Preliminary School Reopening Plan Summary

## 2. Part I: Contact Information, Feasibility Study Results, and Preliminary Reopening Model

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### District Contact Information

**District Name**

Lenox\_0152

For superintendency union leaders, or others who are submitting for more than one district, please list all additional districts for which you are submitting.

n/a

**Superintendent/Executive Director Name**

William J. Cameron

**Superintendent/Executive Director Phone**

(413) 637-5550

**Superintendent/Executive Director Email**

wcameron@lenoxps.org

**Contact Completing Form - Name**

William J. Cameron

**Contact Completing the Form - Phone Number**

(413) 329-6844 (cell)

**Contact Completing the Form - Email**

wcameron@lenoxps.org

**Is Contact Completing the Form the COVID Response Lead?**

Yes

**COVID Response Lead Contact Information****COVID Response Leader Name****COVID Response Leader Phone****COVID Response Leader Email**

**What were the key findings from your in-person learning feasibility study, and what does this imply for the student learning model you may use this fall? Suggested word limit: 300.**

The Lenox Public Schools feasibility study determined that the district's two schools -- preK-5 and 6-12 -- could reopen to all students at once if classroom spacing of 3' were the option; but that neither school could reopen to all students at once if 6' spacing were the option.

It has been the position of the Lenox Education Association (affiliated with the MTA) that, despite the medical sources on which DESE has relied thus far to inform its Guidelines, 3' spacing has not been reliably demonstrated to be an effective distance for preventing the spread of the novel coronavirus even where masking and other necessary precautions are taken. As a result of the MTA's sharing this judgment with its local affiliates' membership, it is reasonable to expect that considerable and sustained teacher absenteeism would ensue were Lenox to reopen on the assumption of 3' spacing. Moreover, it has been reliably reported to Berkshire County districts' leadership that there is disagreement, not least of all from the Centers for Disease Control, with the 3' spacing analysis on which the Commissioner has relied. This means that the MTA's objection to 3' spacing between students in classrooms cannot readily be rebutted.

The Lenox Public Schools has therefore joined other Berkshire County districts facing similar objections from their MTA locals in opting for a "hybrid" model rather than for a full, simultaneous attendance model.

**Which reopening model within your plan are you leaning towards for the start of the school year? Please select the predominant model for elementary, middle, and high school. (For example, in a plan where the majority of students are coming back in-person full time, a subset of students may continue to learn remotely if needed.) Districts can use the text box below this chart to provide further explanation of their selections, if needed.**

	In-person	Hybrid	Remote	N/A
Elementary School		X		
Middle School		X		
High School		X		

**If you would like to provide an additional explanation of the initial reopening model in question 2 above, or if there are additional factors or challenges that you would like us to understand, please write those here:**

As the Commissioner well knows, there are no good options available for resuming instruction under current conditions. In addition to the opposition of the MTA, which is manifesting itself through skepticism on at least some teachers' part about the wisdom of doing anything but resuming 100% remote learning in September, there are no less weighty concerns about the mental & physical well-being of students if school does not resume. There also are readily foreseeable problems, even with 6' distancing in class and throughout the day, in ensuring that masks are worn, hygiene protocols are closely and routinely followed, and that the 6' requirement is strictly observed. Moreover, a hybrid model that avoids serving food in school to a large number of students seems to be the single best way to avoid occasions ripest for the spread of the virus even as a great many students and adults return to school on a daily basis.

**3. Part II: Summary of Three Reopening Learning Models**

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**In-person Model:**

**Please provide a summary of your plan for how students would return to full-time in-person learning. Please reference the “Step 2” section of the Fall Reopening Plan Guidance Document (page 2) and provide an overview of what you believe to be the most critical information about how this model would work in your district. Suggested word limit: 400.**

For reasons stated in Part I, no. 2, above, the Lenox Public Schools' preliminary plan for resuming instruction does not incorporate full-time in-person learning except for students (a) whose IEPs require specialized instruction and related services, (b) requiring accommodations pursuant to § 504, (c) students whose limited English proficiency requires specialized instruction, and (d) whose learning has been demonstrably and egregiously affected by the 3-month suspension of in-school, in-person instruction.

**Will any of your students be learning remotely as part of the in-person model?**

No

**Percentage of students learning remotely as part of the in-person model**

**Hybrid Model:**

**Please provide a summary of your plan for how students would return to school through a hybrid learning model. Please reference the “Step 2” section of the Fall Reopening Plan Guidance Document (page 2) and provide an overview of what you believe to be the most critical information about how this model would work in your district. Suggested word limit: 400.**

The Lenox Public Schools preliminarily plans different but similar models for reopening its two schools. The preK-5 Morris Elementary School will operate on a 5-day/week, 1/2 day model, with morning & afternoon cohorts, as well as full-day attendance for certain students, including EL students, § 504 students, students whose learning is determined to have especially suffered because of the school's closure for the last 3 months of 2019-2020, and those with IEPs entailing services beyond what's required resource room services. Transportation will be provided, with temperature screening taking place before entry on the bus. For students being transported by parents, temperature screening will take place in their vehicles upon arrival. Health & safety protocols that follow DESE's guidance will be implemented, including cleaning of the building during the transition from the AM to the PM cohort. K-5 students, when not in school, will work at home on lessons provided by teachers, and through remote learning. Buses will be cleaned thoroughly at the end of each run, and bus monitors, in addition to using non-contact thermometers to ascertain whether a student is running a fever, will ensure maintenance of safe spacing and mask wearing throughout the trip to & from school.

The plan for the 6-12 Lenox Memorial Middle-HS is different in this respect: Wednesday will not be a day of in-school instruction; instead, it will be reserved for four purposes: (a) remote learning, with students & teachers interacting to ensure that the instruction & learning of the AM and PM cohorts in given subjects remain aligned; (b) IEP meetings, staff meetings, and common planning time; (c) deep cleaning throughout the facility; and (d) provision of related services and additional face-to-face instruction for certain students, including EL students, § 504 students, and those with IEPs entailing services beyond what is provided in a resource room. School entry & transportation protocols cited in the preceding paragraph will be followed, as will DESE guidelines for lavatory cleaning and managing possible COVID-19 cases at both schools.

In considering the feasibility of what has been described here and what is described below (or any other plan that might be put forward), it must be acknowledged that in order actually to implement these plans the Lenox School Committee, pursuant to MGL c. 150E § 6, must bargain the elements of these plans with the local MTA affiliate, whose members' terms and conditions of employment would be directly affected, and who would bear the brunt of most aspects of the plans' implementation.

**Remote Model:**

**Please provide a summary of your plan for remote learning as the default model of instruction for all students. Please reference the “Step 2” section of the Fall Reopening Plan Guidance Document (page 2) and provide an overview of what you believe to be the most critical information about how this model would work in your district. Suggested word limit: 400.**

The Lenox Public Schools recognizes that the remote learning that took place from mid-March through the end of the 2019-2020 school year was in many instances not adequate to meeting the needs of the great majority of our students. The district must ensure that, should there be a resurgence of COVID-19 in the region, further such inadequacy -- however understandable the March-June experience may be in light of insufficient preparation for switching immediately to an effective regime of remote learning -- cannot be allowed to happen again.

Therefore, to enable all teachers to make effective use of electronic and on-line resources in whatever form instruction takes, whether remote or in-class, the Lenox Public Schools has acted in coordination with other Berkshire County districts, to acquire Canvas, a widely used and well-regarded learning management system (LMS) already in use in a Berkshire County district. With adequate training (see below) Canvas should enable teachers to better instruct their students remotely in the event that reversion to this model is required, as well as for students whose parents opt not to return them to school for fear of COVID-19.

To ensure this outcome at least 5 days of professional development for all Lenox teachers and paraprofessionals in the effective use of Canvas and the sharing of lesson plans and resources through Canvas's "commons" feature will be provided prior to the start of the school year for all teachers in the effective use of Canvas and the sharing of lesson plans and resources through the LMS's "commons" feature, will be provided prior to the start of the school year. Thereafter, remote instruction will feature daily interaction by teachers K-12 with their students. Such interaction will consist of direct instruction, work sessions in small groups, mental & physical well-being check-ins, and student learning assessments, resulting in the awarding of grades at regular intervals. As regards student access to the means for participating in remote learning, the district has taken steps to ensure that every student who needs one has a Chromebook dedicated to her/his participation in remote learning, and that every home of a student attending the Lenox Public Schools has adequate Internet speed and bandwidth to support daily instruction of up to up to 5 hrs./day.

Professional development in the effective use of Canvas and improving remote instruction will be provided as the school year proceeds. This will be possible through the use of scheduled 1/2 days of PD and contractually permitted school-based staff meetings.

**Supporting High Needs students:**

**Please provide a summary of how students with disabilities, English learners (ELs), former EL students, and Economically Disadvantaged students will be supported within each of the three reopening models. Suggested word limit: 400.**

As has already been noted, students who fall into any or of the categories indicated in the directions above will receive in-school & full-day instruction and services consistent with their needs under the preliminary plan being described here. "Consistent with their needs" means in conformity with their IEPs, in particular specialized instruction & related services, their § 504 accommodation plans, their need for support in developing or sustaining English language fluency and literacy, or other indicators of special need. In the event that it is necessary to close school because of a resurgence of COVID-19, or in the case of students who fall into one of the categories cited here but whose parent/guardian does not choose to send the student to school for fear of COVID-19, the district will work with the parent/guardian, as was the case during the spring 2020 shutdown, to ensure that special services that would otherwise be provided in-school are provided, recognizing the limitations that lack of physical access to the students may impose on the delivery of certain services to that student.

The preliminary plan for hybrid instruction being described herein would provide all such services in school. The K-5 plan utilizes space that is dedicated already to meeting these special needs for the delivery of services, as well as additional space in the school's library and gymnasium to ensure safe distancing. Services will be provided to students 5 days/week, according to IEPs, § 504 accommodation plans, or other requirements. Reading or math specialists, with paraprofessional support as needed, will provide remedial help for students who have fared especially poorly during the 3-month shutdown, including those who were effectively non-participants. The need for such additional support will be demonstrated by objective measures of proficiency, regardless of socio-economic status.

The 6-12 plan, although it entails morning and afternoon cohorts and a mid-week day for remote learning, will nevertheless accommodate the need for in-school services 5 days/week, as indicated in their IEPs, including specialized instruction & related services, their § 504 accommodation plans, their need for support in developing English language facility, or other indicators of special need.

**Optional: If you have your preliminary reopening plan posted to your website, please indicate the URL here.**

The Commissioner has requested that districts' preliminary reopening plans be kept confidential. Whatever has been done in other districts, the Lenox Public Schools has not posted any specific plan on its website or the websites of its schools. The Lenox Public Schools and the Lenox School Committee have honored the Commissioner's request, although, having begun collective bargaining, and with the Commissioner's acknowledgement that the plans are in fact public records under Massachusetts law, the plans described herein will be shared with the MTA-affiliated Lenox Education Association, and with other interested parties.

**Optional: If you would like to upload your preliminary reopening plan, you may do so here (maximum 1 file, 10MB).**