Comparison of School Reopening Plans

Research Methodology

EAB Reviewed Districts' Publicly Available Reopening Plans on Instruction and Health/Safety

EAB searched for publicly available information on school reopening plans from districts in the Washington Area Board of Education (WABE) and from the 10 largest school districts in the U.S. (by enrollment)—as of July 17, 2020.

- WABE districts comprise **Alexandria City Public Schools** (VA), **Arlington Public Schools** (VA), **Fairfax County Public Schools** (VA), **Falls Church City Public Schools** (VA), **Loudoun County Public Schools** (VA), **Manassas City Public Schools** (VA), **Manassas Park City Schools** (VA), **Montgomery County Public Schools** (MD), **Prince George's County Public Schools** (MD), and **Prince William County Public Schools** (VA).
- The 10 largest school districts in the U.S. (in order of enrollment) are **New York City Department of Education (DOE)** (NY), **Los Angeles Unified School District** (CA), **Chicago Public Schools** (IL), **Miami-Dade County Public Schools** (FL), **Clark County School District** (NV), **Broward County Public Schools** (FL), **Houston Independent School District (ISD)** (TX), **Hillsborough County Public Schools** (FL), **Orange County Public Schools** (FL), and the **School District of Palm Beach County** (FL).

EAB also reviewed school reopening plans—as of July 17, 2020—from **Detroit Public Schools** (MI), **Gwinnett County Public Schools** (GA), **Metro Nashville Public Schools** (TN), and **Wake County Public Schools** (NC).

Across the above districts, EAB reported on the following components of reopening:

- Instructional model (e.g., fully virtual, hybrid, fully in-person),
- Allocations of instructional time,
- Guidance on face coverings (e.g., masks),
- Use of alternative spaces for instructional purposes.

EAB notes that district administrators may change school reopening plans across the next several weeks based on factors such as local COVID-19 pandemic conditions; guidance from local and state health and education experts; and stakeholder feedback (e.g., families, staff).

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Nearly Half of Profiled Districts Will Start the Fall Semester in a Fully Virtual Model

As of July 17, 2020, all 24 profiled districts had publicly communicated at least preliminary plans for instructional model(s) in the fall.

Most notably, 10 of 24 profiled districts will start the fall semester with a fully virtual model *only*. Of the remaining 14 profiled districts, two districts—**Broward County Public Schools** and **Miami-Dade County Public Schools**—will most likely follow suit. Seven districts will provide a hybrid model *with the option of* a fully virtual model.

The table below presents profiled districts' plans for instructional model(s) in the fall, categorized by instructional model. When profiled districts specified instructional time allocations in hybrid and/or fully virtual models, EAB included this information in the table.

Slide 13 of EAB's webconference **What K-12 "Return to Learn" Plans Are Getting Wrong** provides guidance on selecting students' return criteria that balances childcare, equity, and complexity.

Though this table focuses exclusively on school attendance options for general student populations, some districts may offer separate options for special populations.

Instructional Models for the Fall Semester at Profiled Districts

District	Instructional Model(s)	Allocation of Instructional Time (for Hybrid and/or Fully Virtual Models)
Fully Virtual Only		
Arlington Public Schools	• Administrators will provide a fully virtual model	**Fully Virtual** • Four days of synchronous instruction (i.e., Tues-Fri) and one day of asynchronous learning (i.e., Mon) each week • *Elementary School*: 2.5-3.5 hours each day of synchronous instruction. Subject areas comprise language arts, math, science, social studies, and specials (i.e., art, music, physical education (PE)). Students also receive weekly social-emotional learning (SEL) lessons • *Middle School*: 3 hours of synchronous instruction each week per course. Students also receive weekly SEL lessons • *High School:* Varied schedules. Students also receive weekly SEL lessons
Houston ISD	• Administrators will provide a fully virtual model for the first six weeks of school, followed by a phased return to in-person instruction • Families may elect to opt out of in-person instruction for the remainder of the fall semester or for the full school year	-

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Los Angeles Unified School District	• Administrators will provide a fully virtual model	-
Manassas City Public Schools	• Administrators will provide a fully virtual model	-
Manassas Park City Schools	• Administrators will provide a fully virtual model	-
Metro Nashville Public Schools	• Administrators will provide a fully virtual model through at least Labor Day	-
Montgomery County Public Schools	• Administrators will provide a fully virtual model, followed by a staggered return to in-person instruction (i.e., students in pre-K, kindergarten, and grades 6 and 9 return first)	**Fully Virtual** • *Elementary School*: Students will receive some synchronous instruction four days each week (i.e., Mon, Tues, Thurs, Fri). Subject areas comprise math, English language arts (ELA), science, social studies, and specials (i.e., art, music, PE). Students will also receive SEL lessons four times each week • *Middle School* and *High School*: Students will receive some synchronous instruction in each of eight periods, four days a week (i.e., Mon, Tues, Thurs, Fri)
Prince George's County Public Schools	• Administrators will provide a fully virtual option	**Fully Virtual** • Students will receive synchronous instruction each day
Prince William County Public Schools	• Administrators will provide a fully virtual model for the first quarter, followed by a 50 percent return to in-person instruction in the second quarter • For the second quarter, families may elect to remain in the fully virtual model	-
School District of Palm Beach County	• Administrators will provide a fully virtual model, followed by a staggered return to in-person instruction (i.e., students in pre-K, kindergarten, and grades 1, 6, and 9 return first) once the county enters Phase 2 • During Phase 2, families may elect to enroll their children in Palm Beach Virtual School to continue a fully virtual model	**Fully Virtual** • *Elementary School*: 335 minutes of instructional time each day, divided across ELA, math, science, social studies, specials, and PE • *Middle School*: Distance learning will adhere to the standard school schedule (i.e., six periods of 55 minutes each) • *High School*: Distance learning will adhere to the standard school schedule (i.e., seven periods of 54 minutes each)
Most Likely Fully Virtual Only		

Page seven of the district's July 14, 2020 report **Considerations for MCPS Fall 2020 Recovery** outlines the staggered return plan across three phases. **Pages 14-15** present sample schedules for elementary, middle, and high school students.

Slides 16-17 of the district's July 15, 2020 presentation **2020-2021 Reopening Plans** presents sample schedules for elementary, middle, and high school students.

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Broward County Public Schools	• Administrators have not yet made a final decision but will likely provide a fully virtual model • On July 14, 2020, the superintendent announced that he would recommend a fully virtual model if pandemic conditions do not improve. All board members expressed support for the superintendent's approach	-
Miami-Dade County Public Schools	• Administrators have not yet made a final decision but will likely provide a fully virtual model • On July 15, 2020, the superintendent stated that the district is not ready to reopen schools. He highlighted medical expert guidance that students and staff should not return to in-person instruction until the rate of positive COVID-19 cases is under 10 percent and trending towards 5 percent	-
Hybrid with the Option of Fully Virtual		
Chicago Public Schools	• On July 17, 2020, administrators announced a draft framework of a hybrid model for students in grades K-10 • Families that are not comfortable sending their children to school may elect a fully virtual option	**Hybrid** *Students in kindergarten and grades 1-10* • Two consecutive days of in-person instruction (i.e., Mon and Tues, Thurs and Fri) and three days of distance learning • On Wed, students receive synchronous instruction **Fully Virtual** *Students in grades 11-12*
Clark County School District	• Administrators will provide a hybrid model • Families that are not comfortable sending their children to school may elect a fully virtual option	**Hybrid** • Two days of in-person instruction (i.e., Mon/Tues or Thurs/Fri) and three days of distance learning each week • *Elementary School*: Administrators will prioritize core subject areas (i.e., language arts, reading, math, social studies, science) for in-person instruction. For distance learning, students will complete work in core subject areas *and* participate in one, 50-minute class in art, music, or library each week. Students will participate in two, 50-minute PE classes each week • *Middle School*: Students will take four courses per semester (i.e., English/reading, math, social studies/science/elective, health/PE/computers/elective)

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		• *High School:* Students will take four courses per semester
Fairfax County Public Schools	• Administrators will provide a hybrid model • Families that are not comfortable sending their children to school may elect a fully virtual option	**Hybrid** • At least two days of in-person instruction each week (i.e., Tues/Thurs or Wed/Fri). Possibly more in-person instruction based on the number of students who elect the fully virtual option or community health conditions • During distance learning, students will engage in asynchronous learning **Fully Virtual** • Four days of synchronous instruction and one day of asynchronous learning each week • *Elementary School:* Students will receive 2.5-3.5 hours of synchronous instruction each day • *Middle School and High School*: Students will adhere to the standard school schedule
Falls Church City Public Schools	• Administrators will provide a hybrid model for elementary students • Families that are not comfortable sending their children to school may elect to participate in the Virginia Department of Education's online program, Virtual Virginia	**Hybrid** • Two days of in-person instruction (i.e., Tues/Thurs or Wed/Fri) and three days of distance learning each week • During distance learning, students will participate in both synchronous instruction and asynchronous learning
Loudoun County Public Schools	• Administrators will provide a hybrid model • Families that are not comfortable with sending their children to school may elect a fully virtual model	**Hybrid** • Two days of in-person instruction and three days of distance learning each week • *Elementary School*: At least 30 minutes of synchronous instruction each day. At least 90 minutes of asynchronous learning each day for grades K-2. At least two hours of asynchronous learning each day for grades 3-5 • *Middle School and High School*: Each student will meet synchronously with their homeroom teacher for 20 minutes four days each week (i.e., Mon-Thurs) and attend a 15-minute synchronous class session with each teacher on Fri. Students in grades 6-8 will complete at most 90 minutes of asynchronous learning per class each week. Students in grades 9-12 will complete at most 2 hours of asynchronous learning per class each week
New York City DOE	• On July 8, 2020, the New York City mayor and schools chancellor announced that schools	**Hybrid** • Two or three days of in-person instruction each week

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	will operate a hybrid model • Families that are not comfortable with sending their children to school may elect a fully virtual model	
Wake County Public Schools	• Administrators stated that they would provide a hybrid model, but are now considering a fully virtual model due to families' health and safety concerns and childcare needs • Administrators are launching a Virtual Academy to offer a fully virtual option. Families must apply for the Virtual Academy by July 20, 2020	**Hybrid** • Three-week rotation: one week of in-person instruction followed by two weeks of distance learning **Fully Virtual** • Students will engage in both synchronous instruction and asynchronous learning • Students will experience a schedule that is similar to that of the hybrid model
Other Models		
Alexandria City Public Schools	• Administrators are considering three models: fully virtual, hybrid, and fully in-person	-
Detroit Public Schools	• Administrators are planning for hybrid models and fully in-person models	**Hybrid** • Alternating weeks (A/B) of in-person instruction and distance learning • During distance learning, students will receive synchronous instruction in core subject areas each day
Gwinnett County Public Schools	• As of July 14, 2020, families could still choose between fully virtual and fully in-person models	**Fully Virtual** • Distance learning will adhere to the standard school schedule
Hillsborough County Public Schools	• By July 19, 2020, parents must indicate their preferences for fully virtual and fully in-person models. The board plans to vote on a reopening plan on July 23, 2020	**Fully Virtual Option #1** • Students remain enrolled at their brick and mortar school but will attend school online. Students will adhere to the standard school schedule. Students will receive some synchronous instruction each day **Fully Virtual Option #2** • Students enroll in Hillsborough Virtual K-12 full-time and are assigned to teachers within the Virtual School. Students follow a flexible schedule and complete primarily asynchronous learning
Orange County Public Schools	• Administrators are allowing parents to choose between fully virtual and fully in-person models	**Fully Virtual Option #1** • **Orange County Virtual School**: Students complete asynchronous learning (4-6 hours each day) and attend biweekly synchronous lessons **Fully Virtual Option #2** • **Innovative OCPS LaunchED @ Home**: Students remain enrolled at their brick and mortar school.

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	Students receive synchronous instruction each day and adhere to a standard school schedule

Almost All Profiled Districts Will Either Require or Strongly Encourage Face Coverings in School

Of the 24 profiled districts, 22 districts will mandate or strongly recommend that students and staff wear face coverings in school.

If administrators require students and staff to wear face coverings, administrators should specify any exceptions. For example, medical exceptions include individuals who have trouble breathing, are incapacitated, are unconscious, or are otherwise not able to remove the face covering without assistance. In addition, administrators should not require students younger than two years to wear face coverings, per **guidance** by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Requirements and Recommendations for Face Coverings at Profiled Districts

Administrators at **Arlington Public Schools** have purchased three-layer cloth masks for every student and employee. Administrators have also purchased specialized face coverings for students who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Require Face Coverings	Encourage Face Coverings
• **Arlington Public Schools**, **Chicago Public Schools**, **Clark County School District**, **Fairfax County Public Schools**, **Falls Church City Public Schools**, **Gwinnett County Public Schools, Houston ISD**, **Miami-Dade County Public Schools**, **Montgomery County Public Schools**, **New York City DOE**, and **Orange County Public Schools**: students and staff must wear face coverings • **Broward County Public Schools**, **Detroit Public Schools**, **Hillsborough County Public Schools**, **Loudoun County Public Schools**, and **Wake County Public Schools**: students and staff must wear face coverings *when physical distancing is not possible* • **Prince William County Public Schools**: students *aged 10 years or older* and staff must wear face coverings when physical distancing is not possible • **Metro Nashville Public Schools**: *in the case of minimal to moderate community spread*, students and staff must wear face coverings • **Los Angeles Unified School District**: *students* must wear face coverings • **Prince George's County Public Schools**: *staff* must wear face coverings	• **Alexandria City Public Schools** and **Manassas City Public Schools**: administrators highlight Virginia state guidance that states staff must use cloth face coverings when they cannot maintain six feet of distance. The state encourages students to wear face coverings as well

Few Profiled Districts Outline Plans to Use Alternative Spaces for Instructional Purposes

Administrators at **Detroit Public Schools**, **Miami-Dade County Public Schools**, and **New York City DOE** indicate that they plan to repurpose alternative spaces such

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as cafeterias, auditoriums, gyms, media centers, courtyards, and other enclosed outdoor spaces, for in-person instructional purposes.

Notably, **slide 12** of EAB's webconference **What K-12 "Return to Learn" Plans Are Getting Wrong** discusses additional ideas. Aside from reassigning building spaces (e.g., conference rooms, labs) for instructional purposes, administrators can move classes outdoors (e.g., tents on school grounds, stadiums, parking lots) and contract community spaces (e.g., performing arts centers, youth centers, churches).

Sources

EAB reported on reopening plans—published as of July 17, 2020—from the following sources:

- **Alexandria City Public Schools**: web page **Planning for the Reopening of Schools** and June 26, 2020 board presentation **Enhanced Continuity of Learning Plan 4.0: Reimagining Schools**;
- **Arlington Public Schools**: web pages **Full-Time Distance Learning Model** and **Health and Safety**, July 14, 2020 news article **Arlington Public Schools Switches to Remote Learning for Fall, Reversing Course**, and July 2, 2020 news article **APS to Require Masks, Daily Health Checks in Schools This Fall**;
- **Broward County Public Schools**: July 14, 2020 news articles **Broward Schools Should Stay '100%' Online Because of COVID-19, Superintendent Recommends** and **Broward Schools Leader Recommends Distance Learning with Pandemic Worsening** and June 30, 2020 news article **Broward Students Will Have to Wear Masks**;
- **Chicago Public Schools**: July 17, 2020 news article **Chicago Public Schools Announces Reopening Framework for Hybrid Model, Asking for Feedback**;
- **Clark County School District**: June 25, 2020 board presentation **COVID-19 Update and the Clark County School District's Response** and July 10, 2020 news article **Board Reluctantly Endorses CCSD's Reopening Plan**;
- **Detroit Public Schools**: **DPSCD Draft Reopening Plan**;
- **Fairfax County Public Schools**: **Reopening Schools Plan - Operational Approach** and **Reopening Schools Plan - Health Mitigation Strategies**;
- **Falls Church City Public Schools**: July 10, 2020 parent communication **Road to Reopening Update**, **Reopening Plan: Fall 2020**, July 13, 2020 news article **FCCPS Eyes Phased Return for All Elementary Students**, July 1, 2020 news article **F.C. Schools Plan August Reopening With Hybrid Schedule**, and June 29, 2020 article **Falls Church Public Schools Slated to Start Aug. 24 With In-Person and Virtual Learning**;
- **Gwinnett County Public Schools**: web page **Overview of Information About Options for Fall 2020**, July 14, 2020 news article **As Coronavirus Cases Increase, Some Metro Atlanta School Districts Plan to Star the Year Remotely**, and June 26, 2020 news article **Metro Atlanta School Districts Start to Announce Reopening Plans**;
- **Hillsborough County Public Schools**: July 7, 2020 presentation **Reopening Hillsborough Schools**, July 16, 2020 news article **Hillsborough Schools Superintendent Presents Reopening Plan that Delays Start of School Year**, and June 23, 2020 news article **Hillsborough Schools Suggest 3-Option Plan for Return of Classes in Fall**;

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- **Houston ISD**: **HISD Reopening Plan for the 2020-2021 Academic Year** and July 15, 2020 news article **HISD to Begin 2020-2021 Academic School Year Online for 6 Weeks**;
- **Los Angeles Unified School District**: July 13, 2020 news article **L.A. Unified Will Not Reopen Campuses for Start of School Year Amid Coronavirus Spike**;
- **Loudoun County Public Schools**: July 8, 2020 news article **LCPS Extends Deadline for Parents to Select Return to School Scenario**, June 30, 2020 news article **Loudoun Schools Approve Hybrid Plan, With Full-Time Home Option**, June 23, 2020 news article **Parents, Students, and Teachers React to LCPS' Proposed Reopening Plan**, and June 17, 2020 news article **Loudoun School Board Takes Up Plans for Next School Year**;
- **Manassas City Public Schools**: June 23, 2020 presentation **MCPS Forward 2020 Task Force Progress Update**, July 14, 2020 news article **Manassas Schools to Begin Year with Virtual-Only Instruction**, and July 14, 2020 parent correspondence **MCPS to Begin 2020-2021 School Year Virtually**;
- **Manassas Park City Schools**: **district website** and July 15, 2020 news article **Here's the Status of School District Reopenings in the D.C. Region**;
- **Metro Nashville Public Schools**: **Nashville Plan: Framework for a Safe, Efficient, and Equitable Return to School** and July 15, 2020 news article **Several Big US School Districts Are Extending Remote Classes Into the Fall**;
- **Miami-Dade County Public Schools**: July 1, 2020 presentation **Reopening Schools: Plan for the Reopening of Miami-Dade County Public Schools**, July 16, 2020 news article **Many Miami-Dade Parents Surveyed Want Schools Reopened; Superintendent Says Not So Fast**, July 13, 2020 news article **Miami-Dade Public Schools Monitoring Pandemic Locally When Deciding Reopening Strategy**, and July 1, 2020 news articles **Miami-Dade School Board Unanimously Passes Reopening Plan** and **Miami-Dade Releases Tentative Plan to Reopen Schools During Coronavirus Pandemic**;
- **Montgomery County Public Schools**: July 14, 2020 report **Considerations for MCPS Fall 2020 Recovery**, web page **Approved Schedules for Reopening of Schools**, and June 29, 2020 **family update**;
- **New York City DOE**: web page **Return to School 2020: Health and Safety**, July 15, 2020 news article **Key Dates You Need to Know Leading Up to 2020-2021 NYC School Year**, July 11, 2020 news article **NYC Reopening Plan Could Leave 90,000 Students Stranded With No Buses**, and July 8, 2020 news article **Reopen News: Mayor, Chancellor Outline NYC Schools Reopening Plan for Fall**;
- **Orange County Public Schools**: web pages **Innovative OCPS LaunchED @ Home Model**, **Orange County Virtual School**, and **Frequently Asked Questions** and July 15, 2020 news article **Everything You Need to Know About Orange County's Back-to-School Plan**;
- **Prince George's County Public Schools**: web page **PGCPS Operating Norms** and July 15, 2020 news articles **Prince George's County Public Schools Will Continue Distance Learning for 2020-2021 School Year** and **Schools in Prince George's County, Hard Hit by Coronavirus, Will Stay Online At Least Through January**;

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- **Prince William County Public Schools**: July 16, 2020 news article **Prince William County Approves All-Virtual Start to School Year** and web page **School Board Adopts Return to Learn Plan for 2020-21 School Year**;
- **School District of Palm Beach County**: July 15, 2020 presentation **2020-2021 Reopening Plans**;
- **Wake County Public Schools**: **Return to Campus Guide for Families**, July 16, 2020 news article **After Picking Plan B, Wake County Considers Moving to All-Online Classes**, July 14, 2020 news article **Gov. Roy Cooper Announces NC Schools Will Open Using "Plan B"**, July 10, 2020 news article **Applications to Virtual Academy Will Play Key Role in Wake School Reopening Plans**, and July 2, 2020 news article **Wake County Public Schools Board Approves Plan That Involves Three-Week Rotations for Students**.

A Guide to Districts Profiled in this Report

District	State	Approximate Enrollment
Alexandria City Public Schools	VA	15,966
Arlington Public Schools	VA	27,434
Broward County Public Schools	FL	271,852
Chicago Public Schools	IL	378,199
Clark County School District	NV	326,953
Detroit Public Schools	MI	49,931
Fairfax County Public Schools	VA	187,797
Falls Church City Public Schools	VA	2,620
Gwinnett County Public Schools	GA	179,758
Hillsborough County Public Schools	FL	214,386
Houston Independent School District (ISD)	TX	216,106
Loudoun County Public Schools	VA	81,906
Los Angeles Unified School District	CA	633,621
Manassas City Public Schools	VA	7,723
Manassas Park City Schools	VA	3,724
Metro Nashville Public Schools	TN	84,728
Miami-Dade County Public Schools	FL	357,249
Montgomery County Public Schools	MD	162,680
New York City Department of Education (DOE)	NY	984,462
Orange County Public Schools	FL	200,674
Prince George's County Public Schools	MD	132,657
Prince William County Public Schools	VA	90,843
School District of Palm Beach County	FL	192,721
Wake County Public Schools	NC	161,784

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