Decision Points for COVID Comeback Models

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American education leaders have aligned on the idea that a return to school in the fall cannot look the same as our in-person pre-COVID model. Even if schools can fully re-open for in-person schooling, leaders must plan for how they will organize people, time and money to:

- Accelerate student learning to make up for learning loss
- Help students reconnect with schooling and support increased social and emotional needs
- Respond to physical distancing and sanitation requirements
- Provide for teachers and students who don't feel safe attending school or who contract the virus

School and system leaders will need to plan for multiple scenarios. These include **in-person** models, where students attend school in a school building every day; fully **remote** models, where students attend school from home or some other location via laptops and the Internet; and **hybrid** models, where students attend school both in-person and remotely based on an established, predictable schedule.

Because the public health situation is likely to change at some point in the 2020-21 school year, leaders must **prepare for change**. For example, if the pandemic intensifies in a community, school will shift back to an all remote model; if physical distancing is no longer required, school could shift to an all (or mostly) in-person model. Individual students may also need to transition from one model to another based on family circumstances. Therefore, the combination of models in any system must enable **coherence** for if and when a switch in models is required

Any model also requires **trade-offs** to ensure that people, time and money are organized to address a school's or system's most critical student needs. The work of strategically organizing school resources is complex in the best of times. Given current economic conditions, declines in state and local tax revenue may require system leaders to make additional trade-offs during the school year. Therefore, leaders must take care not to lock up resources in structural investments that are difficult to recoup.

Finally, leaders should recognize that the models that work at one grade level may not be feasible across the system - in fact, the more resources assigned to a fully in-person model for some students, the fewer resources will be available for similar support for other students. Therefore, leaders should **consider varying models by grade level.**
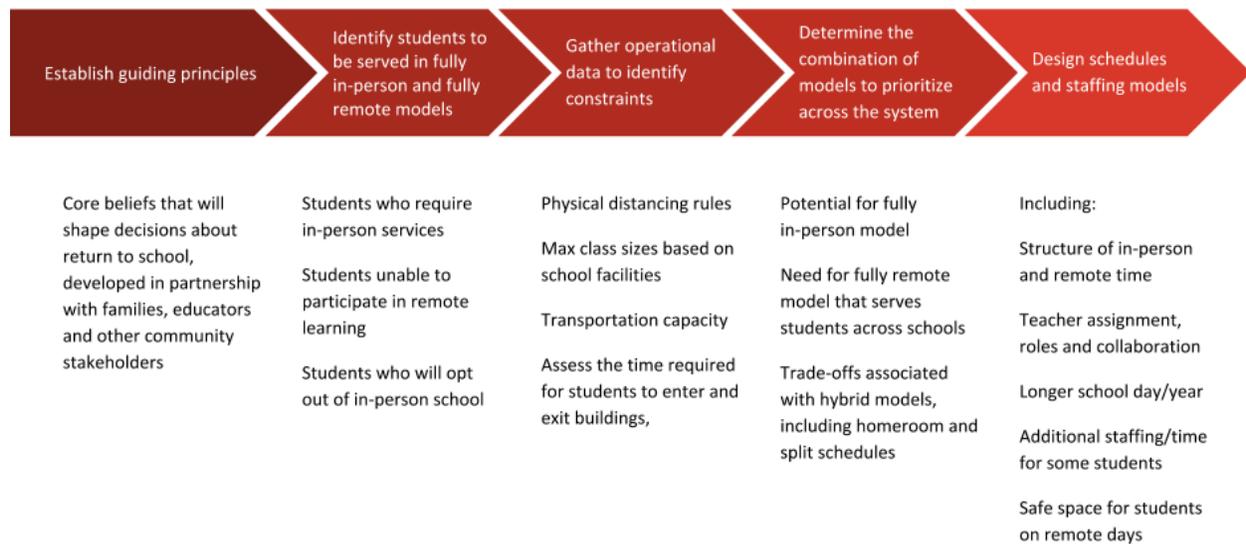
With so much complexity, leaders will need to take a strategic approach to developing and testing scenarios for re-entry that work within the constraints of budget, space, staff and family need - all while optimizing the learning outcomes and support for students.

Designing COVID Comeback Models

In our work with district leaders to create concrete school reopening models, we've identified the critical steps required to narrow the options for consideration. While these steps are organized sequentially, the implications of any one decision is likely to affect leaders' thinking about the others. Therefore, prepare to work iteratively and confirm or adjust your approach as you go.

Figure 1. Process for developing COVID comeback models.

Establish guiding principles	Identify students to be served in fully in-person and fully remote models	Gather operational data to identify constraints	Determine the combination of models to prioritize across the system	Design schedules and staffing models
Core beliefs that will shape decisions about return to school, developed in partnership with families, educators and other community stakeholders	Students who require in-person services Students unable to participate in remote learning Students who will opt out of in-person school	Physical distancing rules Max class sizes based on school facilities Transportation capacity Assess the time required for students to enter and exit buildings,	Potential for fully in-person model Need for fully remote model that serves students across schools Trade-offs associated with hybrid models, including homeroom and split schedules	Including: Structure of in-person and remote time Teacher assignment, roles and collaboration Longer school day/year Additional staffing/time for some students Safe space for students on remote days

1. Establish guiding principles

To provide a strong foundation and shared vision, leaders must work with families, educators, other staff and partners to define a set of simple, motivating set of guiding principles for COVID Comeback Models. These principles clearly state a core set of beliefs that will shape decisions about how students and educators will return to school. The guiding principles we used to develop example COVID Comeback Models are included as an Appendix to this document.

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2. Identify students to be served in fully in-person and fully remote models

Ideally, leaders also have been engaging families, educators and community partners to understand and prioritize students' most significant academic and social-emotional needs. Armed with this information, system and school leaders can begin to design models that could best address family and educator needs this fall. Specifically, leaders should use student demographic and performance data and feedback from families, to:

Identify the proportion of students who most require in-person services. These could include students with severe disabilities, students who receive related services and early-stage English Language Learners. In any model where at least some students could attend school in-person, these students would be prioritized. It could also include students who have the most unfinished learning from last school year and/or who may be at risk of dropping out of school altogether.

Determine the proportion of students who may be unable to participate in remote learning. These students could also be prioritized for seats in an in-person model. Leaders can develop this estimate based on data on which students lack access to sufficient hardware, software and wifi connectivity, the system's ability to fill these gaps in time for the start of the school year and average participation in remote learning this spring.

Estimate the proportion of families who will opt out of in-person school due to health concerns, economic or child care issues. While this data is likely to change over time, a snapshot assessment will give leaders a starting point from which to work. These students will require a remote-only option.

All remaining students can be considered available to participate in whatever models system leaders ultimately implement.

Note: This analysis may yield estimates that vary by school level and individual school. For example, families may be less likely to opt younger students out of in-person school given their need for child care. The prevalence of students with disabilities and English language learners commonly varies across the system as well.

Figure 2. Relevance of remote-only models for a single school or multiple schools

IN PERSON IN ANY SCENARIO	REMOTE IN ANY SCENARIO	AVAILABLE FOR ANY MODEL
Students with specific and significant needs Students who are unable to access remote learning	Students who will not attend in-person school due to health, economic, or child care issues	All remaining students

3. Gather operational data to identify constraints

If they are in place, physical distancing requirements will have a wide range of effects on the in-school experience. Therefore, system leaders should proactively:

Determine the physical distancing constraints to plan for. We may not know what the public health situation will be when schools open. Nonetheless, leaders should determine the specific distancing scenarios they need to plan for.

In addition to physical distancing, consider potential caps on the total exposure of students and adults, especially for secondary schools. For example, could a single student attend classes with different small groups of peers, or does she need to remain with one cohort throughout the day?

Assess school facilities to determine maximum class sizes. After setting aside space for students who require daily in-person services, determine the maximum number of students who can fit in each classroom with assumptions about physical distancing. At this stage, school- and system-wide averages suffice to identify potential models, understanding there may be variation as leaders plan for implementation.

Assess transportation plans to determine what proportion of students could be bussed to school. If physical distancing severely limits bussing capacity, consider revisions to transportation policy (e.g. walk zones) and/or routes.

Assess the time required for students to enter and exit the school building, including any health checks that you will institute. This estimate is likely to vary based on configuration of school buildings. Plan only for the number of students who would attend school on a given day in a physical distancing scenario. Assess the feasibility of using commonly closed doorways to speed students' entrance and exit time.

As was the case with estimating the proportion of students requiring full remote and full in-person models, findings about maximum class sizes, transportation implications and enter/exit times are likely to vary by grade level and, in some cases, by school.

4. Determine the combination of models to prioritize across the system, considering the needs for specific grade levels and groups of students

In this next step, system leaders will define a system-wide picture of the combination of models they will open with in the Fall, for which grade levels and types of student needs. Based on stakeholder feedback, expected constraints and likely resource levels, leaders should have the information they need to develop a fact-based plan for how schools could operate with physical

distancing. Together, these decisions incorporate leadership vision, community perspectives and constraints on staff, space and other resources.

Assess the potential for a fully in-person model. Ideally, a school or system could support full-time in-person instruction. This is feasible if the community supports a full return to in-person school *and either*:

- Physical distancing requirements are not in place, *or*
- Schools have sufficient space, staff and/or small enough class sizes to spread students and teachers enough to comply with physical distancing requirements.

Determine if you will offer a fully remote model for students across multiple schools. This model could work well if there are not enough remote students in a single school to run a full grade-level class and/or enough staff available in a single school to lead all-remote instruction.

Certain grade levels may lend themselves more easily to remote learning as well. For example, most elementary school students require direct supervision and care throughout the day, while many adolescents can engage in learning and other activities independently. Remote models also create opportunities to expose more students to the educators who provide the most rigorous and engaging instruction, since group sizes are not limited by facilities.

Leaders must plan for potential shifts during the school year, including the possibility of a return to full in-person school. Therefore, a multi-school remote-only model also works well in systems where schools share curricula and/or programmatic focus, which will ease students' transition back to their traditional schools.

Figure 3. Relevance of remote-only models for a single school or multiple schools.

Remote-Only Model	Works Well When:
All remote-only students *from a single school*	▪ Each school is large enough to generate scale in its remote-only model ▪ Curricula vary across schools ▪ Each school has a sufficient proportion of highly effective teachers
All remote-only students *from multiple schools or system-wide*	▪ Leaders seek to maximize the scale benefit of remote model ▪ The system employs consistent curricula and instructional cycles (scope and sequence) across schools

Determine how hybrid models could work for remaining students at projected staffing levels. In hybrid models, students attend school in-person some days and remotely on other days according to a predictable schedule. Hybrid models enable educators to provide at least some in-person instruction to all students who are able to attend school in-person if physical distancing rules are in place. Hybrid models are more complex to design and staff than traditional in-person models, so leaders must plan thoughtfully.

Districts are exploring two basic variations of hybrid models: **a "homeroom" model** and a **"split" model**.

Homeroom Model

In a **homeroom model**, a single class includes students both working remotely and in-person, mostly doing the same things at the same time. This approach maintains homeroom cohesion and smooths the transition back to an all-in-person model. Staffing options for the hybrid/homeroom model include:

- ***One educator per class,*** who is responsible for supporting students working in-person and remotely simultaneously. The teacher's job is more complex but staffing is most efficient, creating flexibility for how other staff are deployed across the school.
- ***Two certified educators per class,*** one focused primarily on in-person students, the other the managing engagement of remote students. This model is more resource-intensive and may require trade-offs including higher remote group or class sizes.
- ***One certified and one non-certified educator per class.*** Non-certified staff and/or service partners like City Year could be deployed to reduce the student:educator ratio while conserving certified teacher resources for other class assignments.

Split Model

In a **split model**, students have different schedules on their in-person and remote days. This increases scheduling flexibility and reduces the complexity of teachers' jobs, since each educator teaches in one modality - in-person or remote - at a time.

To assess the trade-offs associated with a split model, determine:

- ***The number of certified staff available for remote instruction.*** This is the total number of certified staff minus the number required to operate the in-person model each day.

- ***The remote student-teacher ratio.*** This is the number of students who would be working remotely each day divided by the number of certified staff available to teach remotely.

- ***How students will spend their remote days,*** including:

  o *The mix of educator-led and independent time.* For example, if students spend 25% of their remote day with a certified staff member, group sizes for their educator-led time will be 25% of the student-staff ratio for remote days.

  o *Optimal uses of in-person and remote time.* Decisions about which activities students will engage in remotely and in-person will affect how staff are assigned and how time is allocated. In-person time may be most valuable if used for Socratic seminars, science labs, complex math work and other core instruction. Remote time can be organized to include skills practice, knowledge-building, office hours with instructors and some online self-driven learning platforms.

Figure 4. Resource tradeoffs associated with hybrid models with and without homeroom structures.
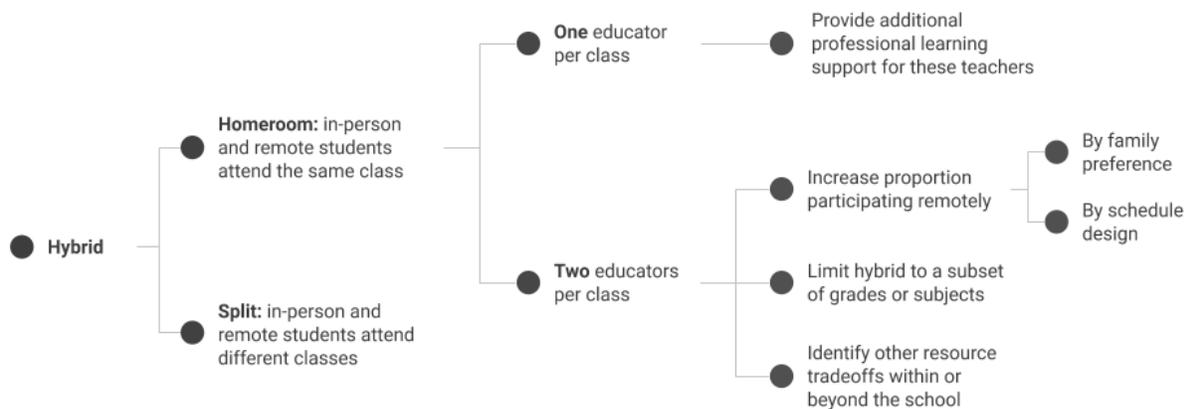
Determine how space limitations affect planning for hybrid models. In the most straightforward hybrid models, half of students who are available to attend school in-person do so on any given day. This could mean students attend school every other day, every other week or two days on and two days off, with a fifth day reserved for intervention and teacher collaboration.

To implement this 50/50 approach, schools require the capacity to host half of all students who are available to attend in-person, with physical distancing in place. To assess the feasibility of a 50/50 model:

- ***For simplicity, set aside students who require in-person instruction*** as well as the space required to serve them; these students will be in-person every day.

- ***Compare the number of students who are available to attend in-person school to the capacity of schools***, based on operational constraints. This could be done for an entire grade span across the system or at the school level.

- ***If schools lack capacity to host half of available students at one time, establish clear priorities for who attends in-person school.*** This may require a lottery system or other explicit prioritization based on community feedback and student need.

If needed, consider creative hybrid alternatives. Where staffing and operational constraints make it difficult to implement a 50/50 hybrid model, leaders have at least two other choices:

- ***Rotate students so in-person days occur less frequently,*** such as an A/B/C day structure where every student attends in-person one out of three days

- ***Limit the A/B hybrid model to certain grade levels,*** such as early elementary students or those in transition grades, or other groups of high-need students. Students not in these grades or groups would then be served in a 100% remote or 100% in-person model – likely the former due to physical distancing requirements.

Figure 5 depicts a system-wide model that leaders might create based on an assessment of the constraints, strategies and decisions outlined above. This set of models incorporates the following priorities:

- ***A remote-only option at all grade levels*** for families who prefer to keep their students out of school buildings until the public health situation improves significantly.

- ***Students with disabilities who are typically served in self-contained settings*** have access to in-person service models at all grade levels.

- ***A consistent school-wide experience for elementary students***, including regular in-person school.

- *A rich in-person experience for middle grades students* that creates time and space to address academic and social-emotional needs in which all students attend in person for two days in a hybrid split model.

- *An intensive focus on ninth grade* to protect against a potential increase in dropout rates attending in a hybrid homeroom model with extra counseling support

- *A remote-only model for grades ten through twelve* that draws on attributes of high-quality secondary and post-secondary remote educational experiences.

Figure 5. Example system-wide configuration of COVID Comeback Models.
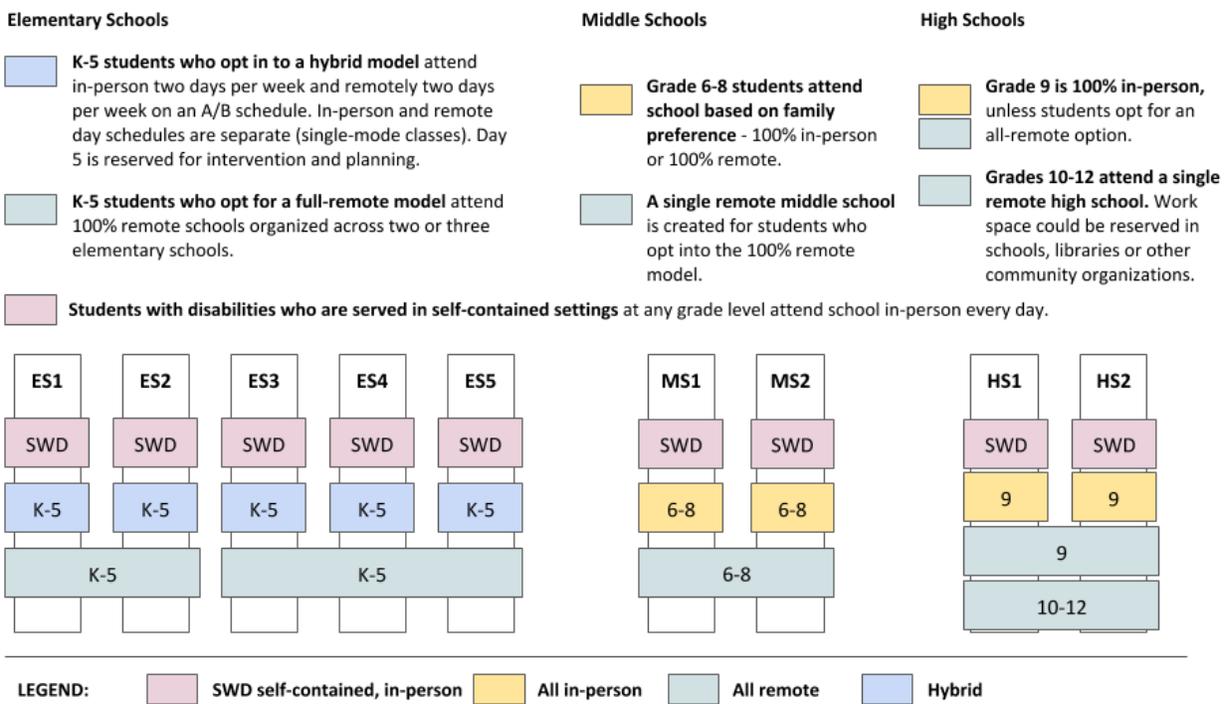
5. Design schedules and staffing models

With a few exceptions, the remaining decisions mirror the ones leaders face when developing schedules in a traditional context. These include decisions about how teachers are assigned to specific classes, teaching teams and leadership roles; the role of departmentalization; and questions about use of student and teacher time, including for individual and collaborative planning. In a COVID Comeback Model, a few considerations are particularly important.

Structure of in-person and remote time. In a hybrid/split schedule model, instructional focus, academic activities, group sizes and staffing may vary on in-person and remote days. Leaders

pursuing a split model will need to clearly outline expectations for uses of remote and in-person time, including the staffing and scheduling implications of those expectations. For example, a remote day may include a set of independent activities, some educator-supported and/or 1:1 check-ins or intervention blocks for students with specific needs.

Teacher assignment and roles. Educators can be assigned to lead instruction not only based on grade and subject expertise, but also based on comfort with and feasibility of leading in-person, remote and hybrid classes.

- *Teaching teams* should be organized to balance and distribute expertise across grades and subjects while considering the skills required to teach effectively in-person, remotely or in a hybrid model.

- *Teacher leaders* are critical to extend the reach of the most effective educators and create space for all educators to develop the skills required in a more complex environment.

- *Departmentalized instruction* focuses teachers on a limited set of content, which can simplify the role. At the same time, a fully departmentalized model with physical distancing requirements in place means certain subjects are likely to be taught in distance learning formats only.

Teacher collaboration blocks are crucial for sustaining high-quality instruction in a newly complex learning context. However, coverage for teacher planning is more nuanced with physical distancing.

In a traditional model, during teacher planning, students are assigned to lunch, recess or specials like art, music or physical education. With physical distancing, leaders may need to limit the exposure of students and adults to a smaller number of other individuals, while many of the educators commonly assigned to "cover" students during teacher planning time may be needed for other instructional roles. Therefore, leaders may seek to schedule teacher collaboration time outside the student day. This might require renegotiating collective bargaining agreements about use of teacher time and/or shortening the student day to create more time for teachers to work without direct responsibility for student supervision.

Staffing for lunch and recess. Teachers will need some independent planning time and/or duty-free periods during the day, which in turn requires plans for adult supervision of students. Depending on the physical distancing requirements in place, this could mean staffing a different teacher to a homeroom's lunch and recess time, or organizing students in larger groups (and therefore in a larger space) during this time.

Length of school day or year. In light of the learning loss suffered by many students this spring, leaders may seek to lengthen the school day or year for all students in 2020-21. This requires thoughtful planning in partnership with families and educators, and could be especially powerful where students have access to highly effective teachers and learning experiences.

Additional staffing and/or time for some students. Schools could be organized to provide increased support for students with the most learning loss or unfinished learning. For example, in a hybrid model with two days in-person and two days remote each week, a "5th day" intervention block would enable a subset of educators to provide focused support for a targeted group of students.

Safe space for students on their remote days. Some students will require a safe, supported place to work on remote days if they are to engage meaningfully in instruction. For example, students could work from local libraries, Boys & Girls Clubs or other venues on remote days, potentially with some adult supervision. Or, if common space exists in schools or other school properties, additional adults be brought to provide additional classroom support, either through national programs like City Year, local programs or school-specific structures?

Appendix A: Example Trade-offs

Staffing levels and group sizes for hybrid homeroom and split models

Consider the hybrid model depicted on the left side of Figure 6. With this traditional homeroom structure and 28 students, 12 students participate on-site (in-person) and 16 join remotely on any given day. Led by one educator, this classroom would operate with a student-teacher ratio of 28:1; the teacher would likely require additional professional learning support to strengthen their ability to lead instruction in this more complex class environment.

Adding a second educator to this class to manage engagement of off-site students would reduce the student-teacher ratio to 14:1; it would also increase the staff-related cost to run the class. Alternatively, leaders could limit the increase in cost by increasing the proportion of students who participate in learning from off-site (typically at home) or by identifying other resource tradeoffs at the school or system level.

For example, adding ten more off-site class participants would increase overall class size to 38; with two educators this creates a 19:1 student-teacher ratio and reduces the school's overall staffing need. Nearly 70% of students (26 of 38) join the class remotely each day, while the remainder attend in person. Increasing the proportion of students served in an all-remote model has a similar impact – with larger remote classes, more resources are available for other small group instruction or additional student support. Alternatively, in a hybrid model that does not maintain a traditional homeroom structure, leaders have the flexibility to vary group sizes and schedules for on-site and off-site students, as depicted on the right side of Figure 6.

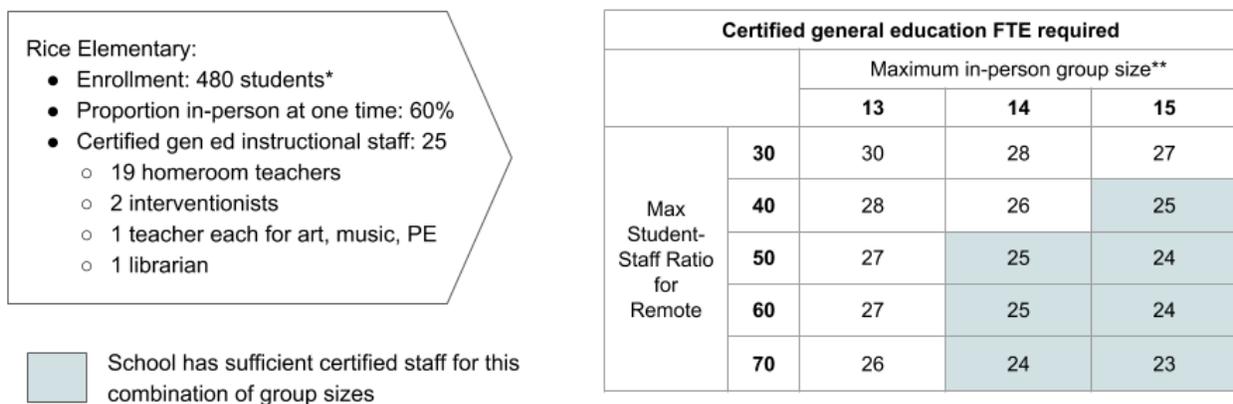**Figure 6.** Hybrid models with homeroom and split structures.
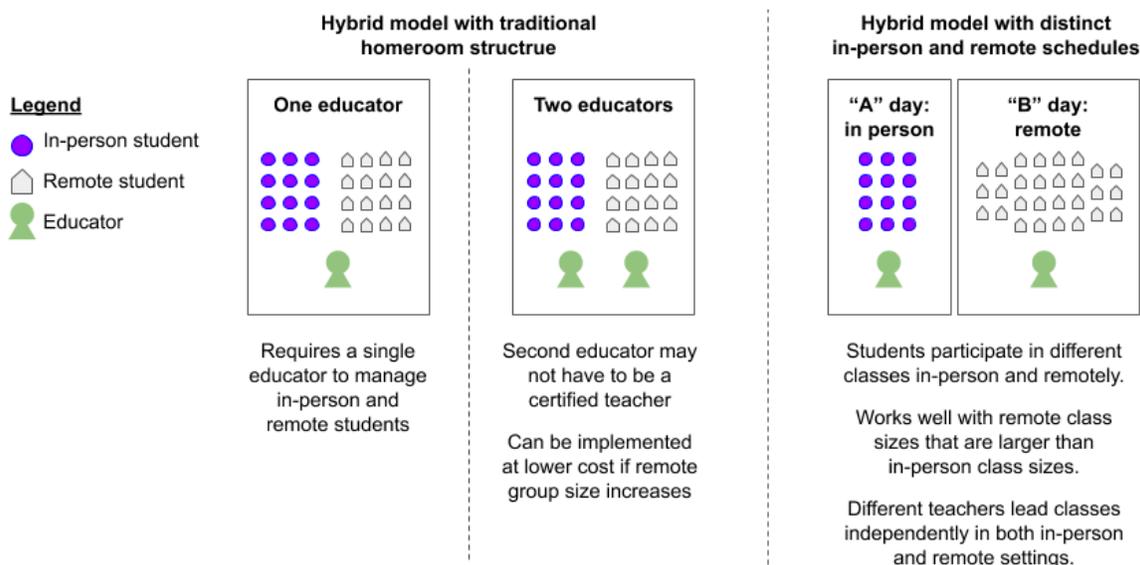
Balancing in-person and remote group sizes

Consider a K-5 school with 480 general education students, or 80 per grade level. The school has 25 staff who are certified to lead general education instruction – 19 homeroom teachers, three specials teachers, two interventionists and a librarian. Based on an assessment of student needs, the capacity of the school's physical plant, physical distancing assumptions and community input, leaders believe as many as 288 students, or 60% of total enrollment, could be in the school building at one time.

Physical distancing requirements and classroom layouts will drive leaders' assessment of feasible in-person group sizes for the 60% of students in the building on any given day. That will leave a specific number of instructional staff to meet the needs of the 40% of students who are working remotely. Because remote instruction may not be educator-led for a full day, the relevant metric is maximum student-to-staff ratio for remote instruction.

In this school, imagine the feasible maximum in-person group size is 14. Serving 288 students in person at this level would require 21 certified teachers, leaving four certified teachers to address the needs of 192 off-site students – or 48 students for each available certified teacher. This means that if all remote students are supported by a certified teacher for their full remote day, remote group sizes would also be 48. However, if remote instruction is organized to enable independent student work for a portion of the day, group sizes for instructor-led periods could be reduced proportionally. For example, off-site students could work with a certified teacher for a quarter each remote day, reducing group size to 12.

Figure 7. Determining target group sizes for a school with a hybrid model.

Rice Elementary:
- Enrollment: 480 students*
- Proportion in-person at one time: 60%
- Certified gen ed instructional staff: 25
  - 19 homeroom teachers
  - 2 interventionists
  - 1 teacher each for art, music, PE
  - 1 librarian

School has sufficient certified staff for this combination of group sizes

		Certified general education FTE required		
		Maximum in-person group size**		
		13	14	15
Max Student-Staff Ratio for Remote	30	30	28	27
	40	28	26	25
	50	27	25	24
	60	27	25	24
	70	26	24	23

*Includes general education and students with disabilities served in inclusion settings. Example assumes that students served in self-contained settings are matched with a separate set of special education teachers.
** Assumes only certified general education teachers can lead instruction

Appendix B: Decision Points Table

1. Establish guiding principles	
Decision Point	**Considerations**
What are the **principles that will guide decision-making** about how students and educators will return to school this fall?	Work with families, educators, other staff and partners to define guiding principles. Use these to provide a foundation for all other decisions about how students and educators will return to school.

2. Identify students to be served in fully in-person and fully remote models	
Decision Point	**Considerations**
What proportion of students will **most require in-person services?** What proportion of students may be **unable to participate in remote learning?**	Districts and schools may prioritize the following categories of students for in-person learning options: ▪ Students with significant disabilities served in self-contained settings; ▪ Students without access to technology or consistent wi-fi; ▪ Students without access to consistent caregiving at home because parents must return to work and/or students must return to school; and/or ▪ Students with unsafe or otherwise unstable conditions at home. Where there aren't sufficient resources to support these students with full in-person options, students could be served in mixed class settings by teachers/instructional aides/community partners to complete remote work.

Based on family and educator needs, what proportion of families and educators do we expect to **opt out of in-person school due to health concerns, economic or child care issues**?	Districts should conduct surveys to understand what proportion of students and educators will be unable or unwilling to participate in in-person learning options. ▪ Family surveys indicate that up to 30% of students are unlikely to attend in-person school until the health situation changes significantly. ▪ Likewise, surveys indicate that 20% of teachers are unlikely to attend in-person school absent significant changes in health conditions, which may limit the staff available to support in-person options.
How might these decisions **vary by school level?**	Early elementary grades may be stronger candidates for in-person options because younger students require adult care and supervision during the day, while high school students may be better equipped to engage in remote learning models.

3. Gather operational data to identify constraints

Decision Point	Considerations
What **assumptions about physical distancing constraints** will shape planning?	In addition to physical distancing requirements, consider potential caps on the total exposure of students and adults, especially for secondary schools.
What is the **maximum class size for in-person learning** based on capacity of school facilities?	Class sizes may be impacted by both health requirements and the availability of classroom space. With limited staff resources, schools may structure remote classes with larger numbers of students to prioritize staff for in-person learning. At this stage, school- and system-wide averages suffice to identify potential models, understanding there may be variation as leaders plan for implementation.

What **proportion of students could be bussed to school** based on physical distancing and transportation capacity?	Schools should consider other physical space limitations, e.g., need for staggered starts to accommodate physical distancing and health checks on entry/exit from the building, limitations on transportation and any other constraints that may limit scheduling options.
How much **time will it take students to enter and exit buildings** with physical distancing in place?	If these constraints become onerous, consider revisions to transportation policy (e.g. walk zones) and/or routes and assess the feasibility of using commonly closed doorways to speed students' entrance and exit time.

4. Determine the combination of models to prioritize across the system, considering the needs for specific grade levels and groups of students

Decision Point	Considerations
What is the **potential for a fully in-person** model?	A return to full in-person school is appropriate if the community supports it and physical distancing requirements are not in place. Alternatively, schools may consider spreading students to unused space (e.g., special classrooms, cafeteria space, gymnasiums) to meet physical distancing requirements.
	Districts should aim to get as many students back to some level of in-person learning as quickly as possible. If limited, schools should prioritize:
	- Students in lower grades (K-5) who would require childcare at home and have difficulty engaging remotely; and - Students in transition grades (e.g., grade 5 or 6 for middle school, depending on the structure of the school, grade 9 for for high school)
	These students may also be prioritized for a return to fully in-person models, if only some grades within a district or school may return to that level.
	In secondary models, where maintaining consistent cohorts of students is more difficult, schools may attempt to reduce the overall number of students in the building and individual class sizes through staggered schedules and hybrid options.

What is the role of a **fully remote model,** either for students across multiple schools or for students at a single school?	Where significant numbers of students will return remotely and consistent curricula and instructional cycles (scope and sequences) exist across schools at certain grade levels/in certain subject areas, students may be best served by one excellent teacher that provides instruction to large numbers of students, supplemented by intervention periods, study halls and/or office hours, rather than asking many teachers to deliver the same instruction in small classes. This may be a particularly beneficial option at the high school level. Where a significant number of students in a school/grade level plan to return remotely, a remote-only option could be created at a particular school in a grade and/or subject areal (e.g., where 30% of Grade 3 at a school preference a remote option, a school could create two in-person classrooms and one remote classroom)
Which students, if any, will attend in a **"homeroom model"** in which remote students stay connected with an in-person or hybrid cohort?	Where there is neither a district-wide option or sufficient interest to establish a school remote option, students could be organized in a homeroom model, in which students participate remotely in any in-person instruction with their cohort of students. This option requires consideration of how many adults would staff each class. With two educators per class, one adult could be assigned to manage remote students and ensure they are fully engaged in the class on in-person days. Such a model can also integrate students that may be absent for extended periods of time in quarantine, but still able to engage in learning. The second educator could be certified or non-certified staff. Alternatively, a homeroom model could be staffed with a single educator per class. This is more efficient from a resource perspective but increases the complexity of the teacher's job to include management of students participating in-person and remotely at the same time.
Which students, if any, will attend in a **hybrid/split schedule model** in which students have different class schedules on in-person and remote days?	Hybrid/split models assume different staffing, schedules and group sizes on in-person and remote days. Assessing the trade-offs associated with a split model involves determining the likely student-teacher ratio for remote days, based on staffing required to support in-person school with physical distancing. Remote schedules can then be designed to balance student time with educators and small student group sizes.

| How will **space limitations** affect planning for hybrid models? | Districts and schools may aim to ensure that all willing and able students in hybrid models can attend school at least 40% of the time. Given likely cleaning requirements, as well as in-person learning needs, schedules in which students alternate in-person and remote learning each day are not likely feasible or preferable. Instead, districts and schools should consider hybrid schedules that include at least two consecutive days of in-person learning, such as:

▪ Some students attend in-person on Mon/Tues (A cohort) and others on Thurs/Fri (B cohort) with Wed reserved for half-day remote instruction and cleaning/teacher collaboration; or
▪ Week in-person (A cohort)/week remote (B cohort) schedules

Where space or staffing constraints limit the amount of time students could attend school in a hybrid model to less than 40%, consider rotating students so in-person days occur less frequently or limiting the A/B hybrid model to certain grade levels |

5. Design schedules and staffing models

Decision Point	Considerations
How should **in-person and remote learning be optimally used?**	Districts and schools should consider the following in determining how to use in-person and remote learning time: ▪ **Daily time for Connection.** Both in-person and remote learning should prioritize time daily for connection through community meetings and/or individual outreach from teachers and/or a member of a student care team organized to support those most impacted by COVID and its effects. ▪ **Focus on ELA and Math Instruction.** While schools may consider innovative ways to offer specials/electives, when challenged with increased content demands and more limited time, schools should prioritize making sure that students continue to make progress in core content in ELA and Math. ▪ **In-person versus remote learning.** Teachers may consider opportunities for asynchronous learning and targeted interventions, while utilizing in-person time for class discussions and diagnostic activities. Remote student schedules will likely include a mix of asynchronous or synchronous learning activities, independent work time, and small group instruction or teacher office hours. To avoid exacerbating achievement gaps, districts and schools should avoid homogenous groupings "tracking" of student cohorts, but use in-person and remote small group and intervention time to accelerate learning, where necessary.

Who should lead instruction in-person, remotely and in hybrid classrooms?	Before COVID, teachers often led all planning and instruction for their own classrooms. In this context, districts should leverage the strengths of individual teachers to provide consistent instruction and minimize burdens for teachers. ▪ In hybrid models, one teacher leader may be responsible for developing lesson plans and conducting in-person instructional delivery across student cohorts, while another teacher/aide may support learning on remote days. Likewise, in fully remote scenarios, one teacher leader may lead instructional planning and delivery across a large number of students, while other teachers/aides provide small group support and/or individual intervention.
How will we organize **teaching teams** to balance and distribute expertise?	Given the demands of new schedules, teacher teaming will be critical. As possible, grade level (elementary) or department (secondary) teams should include: ▪ At least one person with strengths in instructional planning and/or in-person instructional delivery (though this may be a single teacher leader); and ▪ At least one person skilled in supporting remote learning.
How do we want to provide for teacher **collaborative planning**?	To support teaming, schedules should include significant time (at least one block of 40 minutes and ideally 90-minutes or more) for collaborative teacher planning and review of student data (by grade level teams in elementary and grade/ departmental teams in secondary). Schools that previously used time during the school day with students attending back-to-back lunch and specials periods, may need to consider alternatives to create long collaboration blocks, e.g. when students are not in school, since coverage may be more limited.
How will we cover **lunch and individual planning** time?	In schools that limit students to a single classroom with one teacher throughout the day, teachers will still need coverage for lunch and individual planning. ▪ Where individual planning each day is limited to a small block each day, that time may be banked to provide a longer block each week. In addition, teacher leaders responsible for planning and in-person instructional delivery will likely require additional planning time. In a Mon/Tues or Thurs/Fri schedule, for e.g., those teachers may leverage Wednesday morning for individual planning, while other teachers provide targeted small group instruction and/or individual intervention.

How will we adjust the **length of the school day and/or year** to address student needs?	A longer school day and/or school year could help offset learning loss from this spring. This requires thoughtful planning in partnership with families and educators and could be especially powerful where students have access to highly effective teachers and learning experiences.
What **additional staffing and/or time** will we provide for our highest-need students?	For example, in a hybrid model with two days in-person and two days remote each week, a "5th day" intervention block would enable a subset of educators to provide focused support for a targeted group of students.
How might **community organizations and/or other partners** support learning?	Community partners and or other roles (e.g., student teachers, other volunteers) may be leveraged to provide extended learning opportunities, staff safe spaces for students to complete work on remote days, if physical space is available and students unable work alone at home, or provide targeted intervention support.

Acknowledgments