



# **District Reopening Plans**

## **August 14, 2020**

Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter Public School  
15 Mulligan Drive, South Hadley, Massachusetts, 01075  
413-552-1580 [www.pvpa.org](http://www.pvpa.org)

## A. Executive summary

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The PVPA Board of Trustees voted unanimously on August 6, 2020 to adopt a remote learning model for the beginning of the school year. Based on the results of an in-person instruction feasibility study conducted in July and August, PVPA believes this is the safest, most equitable strategy due to the uncertainty of the public health situation. Additionally, we acknowledge the possibility of spreading the virus widely throughout the Pioneer Valley due to our large geographic area as a regional charter school that serves families from Hampden, Hampshire, and Franklin Counties and beyond.

School begins for all students on Tuesday, September 8, 2020, and our 2020-2021 calendar includes 170 days of structured learning as required by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). All students will participate remotely to start, and PVPA will provide additional in-person support beginning in early October for students with high levels of need to the extent feasible while protecting the health and safety of all members of the community.

### **PVPA's Remote Learning Model**

All students will be enrolled in their standard set of arts and academics courses taught by qualified PVPA teachers. All teachers are adapting their curriculum to a remote instruction model, and building their “EdTech” expertise during the three weeks prior to the first day of school. Students are expected to produce evidence of their learning through assignments and assessments at the same level as in a typical school year, and will be graded using PVPA’s existing [standards-based grading system](#). Promotion and graduation requirements are unchanged.

PVPA has developed a [Remote/Hybrid Master Schedule](#) that is an adaptation of the existing [in-person master schedule](#) in order to enable a smooth transition to fully in-person instruction when feasible. Students are expected to be engaged in structured learning activities for a minimum of 5.5 hours per day on average. This includes five 45-minute class periods per day, plus additional time completing assignments and accessing extra support. Most students’ schedules include four or five core academic courses, two arts courses, and one structured support block. Each remote course includes synchronous (everyone at the same time) and asynchronous (self-directed) components designed to promote meaningful engagement with course learning objectives. There is “flex time” built into the master schedule for instructional time with teachers outside of class periods. Teachers use Google Classroom and the suite of Google tools as the primary technology platform. Information about assignments, grades, and attendance is accessible to students, families, and support staff through the online PowerSchool portal.

### **In-person Supports for High Needs Students**

Within the context of the remote instructional model, PVPA prioritizes vulnerable students for in-person instruction, including students with disabilities and English learners. The remote/hybrid master schedule is designed to accommodate maximum flexibility between in-person, remote, and hybrid instruction for both teachers and students. Our building can safely accommodate in-person instruction for up to 90 students.

A priority group of up to 30 students—identified by a team of administrators and specialized support staff members using criteria that includes disability status, English learner status, and access to remote resources—will begin full-day, in-person instruction in early October with other students being added as feasible while meeting health and safety guidelines. Transportation will be provided to any student attending in person in a manner consistent with past transportation practice at PVPA.

Students who require significant support to engage in remote learning, but not in-person instruction, will have a Remote Learning Plan monitored by a special educator, counselor, or general education teacher who will communicate regularly with the student and family. PVPA’s ESL teacher will continue to work with English learners in person or remotely, and coordinate with general education teachers and students’ families.

### **Home-school Communication**

PVPA seeks to collaborate with families in support of all students’ health, well-being, and academic and arts success. Regular communication tools such as our weekly emailed newsletter (“Friday Notes”), the school website ([www.pvpa.org](http://www.pvpa.org)), and the online [PowerSchool Portal](#) continue to be in place during remote learning. Teachers are expected to be proactive in their communication with parents and guardians, and all are accessible via email. Our goal is to collaborate with families in support of student success.

### **Facilities and Operations**

PVPA has a set facilities and operations plan that ensures effective implementation of health and safety guidance. Entry/exit locations, and maximum occupancy determinations for classrooms, office space, and common areas have been set to comply with physical distancing requirements. Spaces are cleaned and sanitized as necessary. Individuals are expected to provide their own personal protective equipment, although supplementary PPE is available as well as hand sanitizing stations throughout the building. Outdoor spaces are available, weather permitting, and prepared food is available through the South Hadley Public Schools for students who are engaged in in-person instruction. An isolation room is available for possible COVID-19 exposure. All staff, families, students, and visitors are expected to follow protocols for healthy behaviors and precautions. Notifications about any COVID related issues or potential exposures will be sent out by the human resource department.

## **B. Letter from the Superintendent to the Community**

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*From August 7, 2020 in the PVPA weekly newsletter*

PVPA Families,

The PVPA Board of Trustees voted unanimously on Thursday, August 6th to adopt a remote learning model for the beginning of the school year. PVPA believes this is the safest, most equitable start to the school year while the future of the public health crisis remains uncertain. Additionally, due to the constraints of our school and our large geographic charter region, we acknowledge the possibility of spreading the virus across a wide swath of Western Massachusetts.

PVPA has spent the summer upgrading and improving the remote program implemented in the spring, with a focus on streamlining the program and building a comprehensive, thoughtful remote class schedule. With a nearly complete course catalog, we are excited about our artistic and academic offerings and the abilities of PVPA teachers to provide students with the same level of expertise, rigor, and excitement as in the physical classroom.

The PVPA Board of Trustees also voted to adopt the recently approved agreement between the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and the Massachusetts Teachers Association to reduce the number of school days from 180 to 170, to allow for 10 extra days of teacher preparation and professional development prior to the beginning of the semester. PVPA will now begin school on Tuesday, September 8th, 2020.

Sincerely,

Marc Kenen, Ed.D.

*Executive Director*

### **C. In-Person Learning Model**

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PVPA's mission is to offer its students intensive exposure to the performing arts within the context of an excellent college preparatory curriculum. We have assessed our building's physical conditions and constraints based upon DESE guidelines. Logistical constraints include: inaccessibility due to hallway traffic configurations; non-operable windows throughout the building; self-contained HVAC system; potential local fire and emergency code constraints; and small physical classroom spaces. Outdoor spaces are a possible temporary solution, but not a reliable long term solution due to weather, curriculum and scheduling issues. Additionally, PVPA hosts students from over 50 cities and towns spanning three counties and 50 miles, and it is not possible to effectively monitor every sending district's health status.

In July, we ran a small feasibility study this summer that included 30 students and 10 staff members who participated in a four-week hybrid program. The staffing, scheduling, safety protocols, and safety materials that were needed to make this happen were tremendous. The effort by staff to keep some of our highest need students practicing safe distancing, mask-wearing, and hygiene was taxing and time-consuming. As a result of this study, PVPA determined that we could support approximately one-quarter of the student body plus staff physically in the building while adequately delivering safe and supportive services in a hybrid model, but that it is not feasible or safe to offer an in-person learning program at the onset of the 2020-2021 school year.

### **D. Hybrid Learning Model**

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PVPA's Hybrid Learning Model prioritizes vulnerable students for in-person instruction, including students with disabilities and English learners. Our master schedule for all instruction in the 2020-2021 school year is designed to accommodate maximum flexibility between in-person, remote and hybrid instruction for both teachers and students. All students and teachers will follow the one master schedule similar to our regular schedule. Students and teachers will have the ability to participate in person or remotely allowing for instruction to continue without disruption if conditions change statewide, within our community, or for individual students or teachers.

A team consisting of the Director of Students Services, Facilities Manager, and School Nurse has determined that our building can safely accommodate up to three pods with a maximum of 30 students each for in-person instruction. Students will be assigned to a classroom in grade-level cohorts appropriately sized to allow for physical distancing in compliance with the DESE guidelines. Students will remain in the same classroom using the same materials such as chromebooks and writing utensils as much as possible with teachers and support staff rotating from classroom to classroom. Lunch and breakfast will be provided for students qualifying for free and reduced lunch and available for purchase for other students outside of the under tents, weather permitting. If weather conditions do not allow for students to be outside, there will be indoor space available with adequate physical spacing as recommended in the DESE guidelines.

Our plan includes a Remote start for all students. The first week of instruction for students will include explicit instruction in remote learning skills including time management, habits of work and learning in a remote setting, and the use of specific technology platforms and tools that will be essential for success during this school year.

Beginning in the third week of instruction, a group of 20-30 students identified for in-person instruction will have access to full-time in-person instruction at PVPA. Instruction will be provided using a blended model where some students will be accessing the class virtually from home while others will be supported in a classroom setting.

Student attendance and participation will be monitored closely in the first few weeks of school and at the end of week five, grade-level teams will identify additional students who require in-person instruction. Additional groups of students up to a total of 90 students will be provided in-person instruction beginning in week six. The total number of students in the building at any time will be dependent on our ability to safely and adequately staff the in-person component of our hybrid plan.

If we are unable to safely and effectively accommodate a student categorized as High Needs, or a parent of a High Needs student elects to keep their student learning remotely, a Team will convene to develop a plan to support that student using remote means.

## **E. Remote Learning Model**

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All students will be enrolled in their standard set of arts and academics courses for the 2020-2021 school year, which will be taught by the existing set of PVPA teachers, all of whom meet relevant qualifications. All courses offered during the year have been designed to be adaptable to remote instruction. All courses follow curriculum maps that identify course objectives that are based on Massachusetts curriculum frameworks, and a scope and sequence of instructional units. Teachers will use the school's existing standards-based grading system to report on student progress and assign final grades. Per usual, students in grades 7 and 8 are graded on a Pass/Attempted (no credit) basis, and high school students are graded on a scale that is aligned to the 4-point GPA system. Promotion and graduation requirements have not changed.

PVPA has developed a Remote/Hybrid Master Schedule (see below) that is an adaptation of the existing in-person master schedule in order to enable a smooth transition to fully in-person instruction when feasible. Students will be engaged in structured learning activities for a minimum of 5.5 hours per day on average. This includes five 45-minute class periods per day, plus 1.75 hours of flex time that includes asynchronous coursework, small-group instruction, and individualized instruction facilitated by their course teachers and other support personnel. PVPA operates on a block schedule that contains eight blocks, each comprised of three 45-minute periods per week. The block configuration matches the existing in-person master schedule to enable a smooth transition back to fully in-person instruction when the time is right. Most students at PVPA

take four or five core academic courses, two arts courses, and one structured support block. Students in grades 7 and 8 have a 45-minute advisory period once per week with a structured curriculum.

<b>Remote/Hybrid Master Schedule</b>					
	<b>MONDAY</b>	<b>TUESDAY</b>	<b>WEDNESDAY</b>	<b>THURSDAY</b>	<b>FRIDAY</b>
<b>8:00-8:55</b>	<b>Flex Time</b>				
<b>9:00-9:45</b>	<b>A 7-8 Advisory</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>A 7-8 Support</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>A 7-8 Support</b>
<b>9:55-10:40</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>C</b>
<b>10:50-11:35</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>E</b>
<b>11:35-12:15</b>	<b>Lunch</b>				
<b>12:15-1:00</b>	<b>H</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>F</b>
<b>1:10-1:55</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>H</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>H</b>	<b>Community Time</b>
<b>2:00-3:40 (4:00 Friday)</b>	<b>Flex Time</b>				

Each remote course includes synchronous (everyone at the same time) and asynchronous (self-directed) components designed to promote meaningful engagement with course learning objectives. Activities include a mixture of computer-based and non-computer-based assignments. Teachers provide opportunities for regular social interaction among students, and access to teacher support. As usual students receive teacher feedback on their work, and have opportunities for revision.

Teachers take attendance in PowerSchool in each class period, and students are expected to check in virtually at the beginning of each period even if the planned work for the day is primarily asynchronous. Student absence may be marked as excused if a parent/guardian communicates with the teacher or school, or unexcused if there is no parent/guardian communication. Administrators track student attendance, investigate patterns of nonattendance, and work collaboratively with families to overcome barriers to participation.

PVPA uses PowerSchool as its primary student data management platform, and has also been using the Google Suite for nine years. All teachers use Google Classroom as the primary means for managing their courses, and supplement the Google Suite with technological tools based on their course needs. As usual, teachers will enter assignments, grades, and attendance into PowerSchool, and these data are accessible to students, families, and support staff through an online portal. All students will be required to complete a remote learning training—designed and implemented by school staff—before classes begin that will ensure they have a consistent set of foundational technology skills that are essential to success in a remote setting. This training includes key elements of the Google Suite, as well as organizational strategies and executive function skills.

Even if most students are engaged remotely, PVPA will arrange for in-person learning for high-need students to the extent possible. Priorities for in-person support include: students with disabilities, English learners, and students who had difficulty engaging in remote learning during spring 2020, and students who are significantly behind in meeting requirements. No student will be required to attend school in person. Support in addition to what is already being provided by teachers in every course and support block will be provided by paraprofessional educators who will be responsible to support students to: log into their remote classes and maintain focus, start and work on assignments, complete and turn in work, access teacher support, and organize materials and workflow. These paraprofessional educators will also be responsible to coordinate and collaborate with teachers and other support staff members in support of student success.

Administrators support teachers to communicate regularly with students' parents/guardians and caregivers. Flex time is built into the master schedule, and teachers are expected to communicate with families about their availability, and to proactively reach out to families to convey successes and concerns. Interpretation and translation support is provided to families with limited proficiency in English.

## **F. Out-of-school Time Plan**

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PVPA's Remote/Hybrid Master Schedule includes "Flex Time" at the beginning and end of each day. This flex time is intended to allow for individual support and help sessions for students in addition to their regularly scheduled time with special education teachers in accordance with IEP service time, and Homework Support with an Instructional Support Professional. Students identified as needing additional support will have a Remote Learning Plan developed with scheduled time during the flex time to meet in-person or remotely with general education teachers, Instructional Support Professionals, or special education teachers.

Special attention will be given to students whose families may struggle to support them with online learning at home and arrange for them to be supported at PVPA. Similar to the way PVPA typically has supported students with medical or mental health needs resulting in the need for tutoring outside of school, arrangements will be made for staff from the school to meet with students in a safe location to provide

individual tutoring. This may occur during flex time or during evenings and weekends. Staff providing tutoring services outside of the master schedule will be compensated at an hourly rate.

## **G. Student Supports**

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Under the guidance of PVPA's Director of Student Services, grade-level teams consisting of counselors, special educators and general education teachers will review data from the spring remote learning program and summer hybrid program to identify students for in-person learning and those in need of a Remote Learning Plan meeting. Close attention will be paid to students with disabilities, English Learners and those identified as economically disadvantaged.

Students identified for in-person learning will be selected based on criteria similar to Special Education Eligibility Determination with the Least Restrictive Environment in mind. When considering the Least Restrictive Environment during remote learning, a student's home will be considered to be the LRE. Therefore, the Team will consider all options to effectively support a student using remote strategies before bringing them into the building for in-person learning. These strategies will include, but are not limited to individual and small group remote help sessions with general education teachers, special educators and support staff; individual tutoring at a neutral offsite location such as a park or other public space; and having a teacher or counselor assigned as a "navigator" to meet regularly with the student to help them to organize their time and utilize strategies for success within a remote learning model.

If it is determined that a student requires in-person instruction in order to access the curriculum and make effective progress, and the parent is not opting for 100% remote learning, the student will be assigned to a grade-level cohort of students who will follow a similar schedule in the building. These students will access the same virtual class meetings as other students participating remotely. However, they will be supported in each class by the teacher of the class, a special education teacher, or a paraprofessional. Staff in the building will support students based on their individual learning needs to access instruction and complete assignments. Students will have the option of attending full-time or on a part-time basis agreed to by parents and the school. Transportation will be provided to any student attending in person in a manner consistent with past transportation practice at PVPA.

Students who require significant support to engage in a remote learning model but are determined to not require in-person instruction, will have a Remote Learning Plan meeting scheduled to develop a plan for support. All plans will be assigned to a special educator, counselor or general education teacher to be monitored. Staff assigned to monitor a plan will communicate regularly with the student, his or her teachers and family. A student, parent or teacher may request a review meeting at any time to consider the need for additional support or in-person instruction.

PVPA's ESL teacher will continue to work with English Learners in-person or remotely. The ESL teacher will also attend grade-level meetings on a weekly basis to consult with teachers with regard to providing appropriate instruction for all ELs and FELs.

PVPA's school counselors and school adjustment counselor will meet weekly as a team and will join weekly grade-level meetings to review students of concern with regard to their social-emotional needs. Counselors, along with our Dean of School Culture will provide teachers with social-emotional learning activities and curriculum to incorporate into class sessions throughout the school year. Our adjustment counselor will continue to provide individual counseling sessions using a HIPPA-compliant online platform.

PVPA's special education teachers, reading specialists, and SLP will continue to provide all services included in student's IEPs either by remote means or in-person.

## **H. Professional Learning**

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Under the guidance of PVPA's Director of Teacher Development and Technology Coordinator, PVPA implemented a three-week remote professional development program for teachers during summer 2020 (24 hours total). Program goals included: developing school-wide norms for Google Classroom; collaborative instructional planning for remote learning; and strengthening and extending teachers' EdTech skills. Participants spent significant time developing lessons and units for their upcoming courses, and provided critical feedback to each other through structured protocols.

All teachers begin work on August 18, 2020 as originally planned. New teachers have two full orientation days prior to that on August 14 and 17, 2020. There were four professional development days already scheduled before the start of school, and PVPA has added ten additional days based on DESE recommendations that are required for all faculty members. The first day of school for students will be September 8, 2020. A team of educators and administrators developed an all-student orientation that is required for the first few days of school, and is focused on building students' knowledge of the Google Suite plus executive function skills.

During the fourteen professional development days, teachers will collaboratively retool existing curricular resources for remote instruction using Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and the SAMR model (Substitution, Augmentation, Modification, and Redefinition) to frame their work. All teachers will be trained on the school-wide Google Suite norms and practices developed through the summer professional development program. We also plan to replicate the summer professional development program components related to collaborative instructional planning for remote learning, and strengthening and extending teachers' EdTech skills for teachers who have not yet participated.

## J. Certification of Health and Safety Requirements

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### Facilities space preparation

- Student learning spaces
  - *Classrooms cleared out as much as possible, Students 6' feet apart, designated teachers space, each classroom outfitted with separate cleaning and sanitizing supplies*
- Staff office set-up
  - *Each staff office space is outfitted with separate cleaning and sanitizing supplies and additional sneeze guards, face shields and goggles are readily available.*
- Mask break spaces
  - *Outdoor open air tents will be available as weather and space permits. If outdoor space is not available, we will be either utilizing other bigger open spaces in the building to allow staggered breaks and limit class movement and mixing of cohort's throughout the building to the extent possible or each classroom's (cohort) students are spaced 6' apart so mask breaks can safely be provided indoors with proper supervision.*
- Student eating areas
  - *Outdoor open air tents will be available as weather and space permits. If outdoor space is not available, we will be either utilizing other bigger open spaces in the building to allow staggered eating breaks and limit class movement and mixing of cohort's throughout the building to the extent possible or each classroom's (cohort) students are spaced 6' apart so eating breaks can safely be provided indoors with proper supervision.*
- Medical waiting room
  - *Our new isolation room is outfitted to handle 3 occupants should COVID-19 symptoms arise during the school day. This room also has a separate exterior entrance/exit to use as needed. The room will be staffed by a school nurse anytime there is an occupant in the isolation room.*
- Entry and exit points
  - *The isolation rooms has a private entrance/exit. Each pod (section of designated 30 students at a time) will have a designated entrance and exit from the building to their isolated section of the school building. There is one main entrance for normal school business and staff. This entrance is always locked. Staff have key FOB's to gain access and public business will be allowed in at the discretion of the main office staff.*
- Storage and disposal of unnecessary furniture or other items
  - *There will be a few designated classrooms for storage of over stock school furniture that will be kept locked and secured.*

### Modifications to facilities and building systems

- Handwashing and hand sanitizing stations
  - *Each restroom (and some classrooms) have sinks available for handwashing. All classrooms will be outfitted with a hand sanitizing apparatus. Additionally there are hand sanitizing stations throughout the entire schools hallways.*
- Ventilation and HVAC systems

- *PVPA has a closed HVAC system and there are no operable windows in the school. HVAC units and condensing were just cleaned in July of 2020. We are also upgrading our current HVAC Filters to the highest standards that our units will allow.*
- Hallways
  - *All but one hallway in the school is between 5' - 6' wide which makes two way traffic difficult. We will be making all hallways that we can one way as well as staggering class times to mitigate potential physical distancing issues.*
- Bathrooms
  - *All bathrooms are cleaned and disinfected nightly and once a week we use a steam cleaner on all fixtures in every restroom. Bathrooms will also be cleaned after each use when in a school session.*
- Water fountains
  - *Water fountains in the school are currently out of use. We are in the process of replacing them with water bottle filling stations.*
- Lockers
  - *N/A Our school does not have lockers.*
- Signage throughout the building
  - *COVID 19 awareness, hand sanitizing and washing signage will be placed throughout the building.*

### **Operational protocols**

- Cleaning and disinfecting
  - *Cleaning and disinfecting is performed throughout the entire school each night as well as enhanced disinfecting of any occupied areas throughout the day by our sub contracted cleaning service. Any additional cleaning or disinfecting needed during the day will be done by school staff.*
- Food preparation and distribution
  - *We do not make food at our school. We do however bring in prepared food for breakfast and lunch. Food will either be pre packaged and left on a table for student pick up or brought to each classroom. (cohort) Students will either eat outside (weather permitting) or will eat in their designated classrooms (cohorts) and will be spaced 6' apart.*
- Movement in the facility
  - *Movement around the school will be kept to a minimum and whenever possible be staggered times.*
- Arrival and dismissal of students
  - *Currently our first pod of 30 students will arrive and depart from the school using one door. We are placing staff around that door during arrival and dismissal to make sure students exercise proper physical distancing.*
- Sharing items
  - *We are discouraging sharing of any item. Each student should have their own Chromebook and working logistics out to try and elevate any other needs of sharing school supplies.*
- Visitor and volunteer engagement

- *We have developed a school [COVID 19 Liability Release Waiver Form](#) that any visitor, volunteer or contractor will need to sign prior to or upon the school.*
- Using the medical waiting room
  - *Our Nurse's Office will be used for any unrelated COVID 19 issues. We have a separate Isolation Room for any COVID 19 related issues. The Isolation Room will be staffed by a RN when occupied.*

#### **Communication protocols**

- *Notifications about any COVID related issues or potential exposures will be sent out by the human resource department.*

#### **Inform students, families, staff, and visitors to ensure alignment and adherence to guidance**

- *[COVID 19 Liability Release Waiver Form](#), mandated COVID-19 training for staff, families and students.*