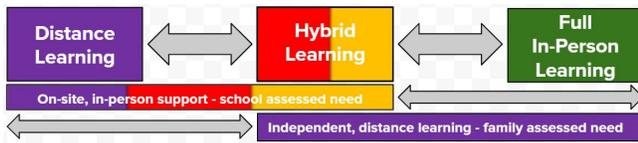# Education Through & Beyond COVID19

What Does an Equitable Return to In-Person Learning Look Like in Marin?
A summary of School Reopening Plans, Key Considerations, and Next Steps
Fall Update 10.19.20

All Districts in Marin have worked hard over the summer, and now into the Fall, to develop and implement back-to-school plans that will allow them to move forward and backward along a continuum of strategies as the county moves forward (or backward) along the State's new 4 Tier COVID19 monitoring system. ***This document provides a summary snapshot of key reopening considerations and where each Partner District currently stands with its School Reopening process.***

Key Considerations

Schools are now allowed to open to in-person instruction because the County has been in Tier 2 (red) for over 2 weeks (see the **State's new 4 Tier COVID19 monitoring system**). Schools are not required to close if a county moves back to Tier 1, but should consider surveillance testing of staff. Each School Board decides when and how to reopen in person. Here's a link to the County's COVID update page.

The disproportionate health and economic impacts of COVID-19 on low-income and BIPOC communities also means that these groups will likely experience greater educational impacts since communities with higher infection rates will be less likely to open schools as soon, and as extensively, as those with lower infection rates. To address this disparate impact, the State implemented a health equity metric which went into effect on October 6, 2020, and additional resources were recently allocated to provide COVID-19 tests for over 1,000 students, family members, teachers and staff in San Rafael City Schools.

Once in Tier 2 Districts must follow a number of **accountability standards** including:

- The California Department of Public Health's (CDPH) 20 page Industry Guidance for Schools and School-Based Programs

- The California Department of Education's (CDE) accountability guidelines (i.e. Learning Accountability Attendance Plan, revised LCAP process etc.), and

- School Site Specific Protection Plans (SSSPP) that describe how each school site will adhere to The Marin County Public Health Department's, 4 page, 30 point plan (developed in cooperation with MCOE). Over 125 schools have already submitted SSSPPs.

- The current State budget also articulated new CA Distance Learning Standards which formed the basis of the new CDE accountability guidelines.

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In addition to the above, the **CDE and the CDC have published guidelines** and recommendations for how best to configure COVID-19 safe learning environments through the use of strategies such as small cohorts and alternate scheduling (i.e. hybrid) so as to adhere to their recommended standards for things such as distancing (6ft), regular sanitation and hand washing, and contact tracing for individuals who have been in close contact (within six feet for 15 minutes or more) with someone known to have tested positive for COVID-19.

- [Stronger Together: A Guidebook for the Safe Reopening of California's Public Schools](#) (CDE)

- [FAQ for School Administrators on Reopening Schools](#) (CDC)

Schools may also provide **structured, but non-instructional, in-person supervision and services** to students under the CDPH's Guidance for Small Cohorts/Groups of Children and Youth. This means that schools and/or their community partners may provide on-site **Learning Hubs** even if they are not providing in-person instruction.

CDE Recommended Hybrid Models

"The most popular model for reopening K-12 schools is a hybrid, or blended, model of instruction, which has students attending some classes on campus and doing some work at home. Almost all also will offer an independent learning model..." ([EdSource](#))

CalMatters' article ["It's complicated: School reopenings, hybrid learning look different across California"](#) is a good comprehensive overview of the various Hybrid Learning models recommended by the California Department of Education in its [Stronger Together](#) guidebook.

While everyone wants what's best for students, many complicated, often conflicting, priorities are being considered by District staff and Boards as they develop their plans. Some of these factors include:

- Space available to maintain the CDC and CDPH 6ft distancing guideline and/or the MCOE/Marin Public Health 4-6ft guideline.

- Teacher shortages for in-person instruction based on age and health considerations.

- Parent/family needs (health and work schedules)

- Health safety procedures and equipment for cleaning, testing, tracing, outside classrooms, improved ventilation etc.

- Additional costs in staff and equipment

3 models of hybrid scheduling

2-Day Rotation Blended Learning

- Based on grade level, students would attend school two days out of the week, do enrichment opportunities two other days, and do distance learning on Fridays.
- Example: At a K-6 elementary school, grades K-3 would attend campus Mondays and Wednesdays, while grades 4-6 attend Tuesdays and Thursdays.

A/B Week Blended Learning

- Half of a school's students would attend school four full days per week while the other half does distance learning.
- The groups alternate each week.
- Students would do distance learning one day out of the week.

Early/Late Staggered Schedule

- Two groups of students take turns attending school, with one cohort starting in the morning and the other in the afternoon.

Source: Guidance from the California Department of Education, "Stronger Together: A Guidebook for the Safe Reopening of California's Public Schools"

Marin Reopening Summary

Waivers
Of the 33 public and private elementary schools, special education programs and alternative programs who received waivers to open for in-person instruction, 4 are very small public schools (Laguna - 10, Lincoln - 7, Nicasio - 38, and Bayside MLK - 108) and one is an independent Charter School (Willow Creek - 376).

Reopening Plans & Community Engagement Processes
Below is a summary of how each of the Marin Promise Partner Districts are approaching their Hybrid Learning Models as they *"... create a system that doesn't perpetuate inequities in historically underserved communities AND keeps kids safe and engaged in learning?"* (SRCS Focus on Equity). All districts are surveying and meeting with parents, teachers and staff under the belief that *"Equity Starts with Empathy and Engagement"* (NUSD Return to School Guide). In addition to the zoom listening sessions and surveys that all Districts have conducted, NUSD and SRCS have crowdsourced community ideas and feedback through the use of the ThoughtExchange application.

Districts Open to Full In-person Learning
- Laguna - 10 students
- Lincoln - 7 students
- Nicasio - 38 students
- Bayside MLK - 108 students
- MCOE SpEd/Alternative (5 schools, approx 300 students)

Districts Open to Hybrid Learning
- Ross School (1 School 210 K-5th, 150 6th-8th am/pm staggered schedule)
- Larkspur-Corte Madera (3 schools, am/pm staggered schedule)
- Reed Union (3 schools, A/B 2-day rotation)

Districts in Process / Provisionally Open (phased in hybrid)
- Kentfield (2 schools, Phased in Hybrid)
- Miller Creek (4 schools, phased Hybrid)
- Ross Valley School District (5 schools, A/B 2-day rotation)

Districts Not Yet Open
- Mill Valley (6 schools; K-5th End Nov, 6-8th Jan; am/pm staggered)
- Lagunitas (2 schools; TBD Hybrid)
- Bolinas-Stinson (1 school/2 campuses)
- SRCS TK-8th (9 schools; Nov Hybrid; TK-5th am/pm staggered; 6th-8th A/B 2-day rotation)
- SRCS HS (3 schools; Jan Hybrid; A/B 2-day rotation; 3 classes per semester)
  SRCS Re-entry Task Force Recommendations, July 28th
- NUSD TK-8th (10 schools; Nov Hybrid TBD)
- NUSD HS (4 schools; Jan Hybrid TBD; 4 classes per semester)
  NUSD Return to School Guide, July 28 & Return to Flexible In-Person Learning Recommendation October 6th

- TUHSD (5 schools; Jan Hybrid TBD possibly am/pm staggered; 7 classes per semester)
  [TUHSD Fall Reopening Plan Update July 14](#)
- Shoreline TK-8th (4 schools; Hybrid TBD)
- Shoreline HS (1 school; Hybrid TBD)
  [Shoreline Return to School Plan July 31st](#)

Next Steps & Opportunities for Collaborative Action

Techquity - Technology enabled Equity

Techquity means practices at the classroom, school, and district level that leverage technology for more equitable and culturally responsive education. Techquity related Partnership initiatives include:

- Closing the Digital Divide - Broadband internet access for all students through hotspot lending libraries and neighborhood mesh networks.

- Learning Hubs - While safety concerns keep some schools in one form or another of Distance Learning, students who need extra support to engage with their remote classrooms can access the internet and get in-person help at Learning Hub across the county.

- Other Techquity solutions include Virtual Literacy Pods for early grade learners and virtual; tutoring support.