



Livingston Public Schools
Mid-Year Hybrid Model Update
January 11, 2021

Where we have been...

- Facilities have been open for hybrid learning for four months at the elementary level, and for three months at the secondary level despite many challenges and setbacks.
- Very successful and enjoyable fall athletic season and fall season of outdoor activities.
- One of few school districts in the area that was able to stay open to a large extent between Thanksgiving weekend and winter break.
- Currently completing two weeks of all remote learning. This has allowed many of our families and staff members to see family and complete needed travel safely. We made this decision in November and other districts followed.



Factors impacting in-person learning plan:

- “Orange” or “High Risk” by the Department of Health motivating changes to our contact tracing and quarantine protocols. We have been at this level for almost two months.
- Due to medical leaves, family leaves, and the current prevalence of virus, we are still managing extensive staff absences. This forces us to use proctors to cover classes, particularly at the secondary level.
- Around the Thanksgiving and winter break, a number of our families withdrew from in-person learning and decided to remain fully remote. Consequently, our in-person population significantly diminished.
- The winter weather and lack of sunlight has ended most in-person outdoor after school activities.



Landscape of the Pandemic:

According to nj.com, as of January 11, 2021 in New Jersey:

- 339 - All Remote (44%)
- 348 - Hybrid of Remote and In-Person (46%)
- 77 - Offering all in-person (mostly small elementary districts, 10%)

Last Week Numbers- ALL REMOTE (January 4 - 8) - Self Reporting

- 17 LPS Community Members Quarantined (6 Staff / 11 Students)
- 16 LPS Community Members Tested Positive (7 Staff / 9 Students)

Community Spread - Livingston

- 842 Cases March - November 2020 - Average **94** cases per month
- 269 Cases December 2020
- 54 Cases First Week of January 2021 - On track for over 200



Orange Designation (since November 19, 2020):

COVID-19 Regional Risk Matrix

**For use by LHDs when providing guidance to school districts*

Low Risk	Moderate Risk	High Risk	Very High Risk
<p>Evaluate alternatives to in-person learning to ensure continuity of work or educational services.</p> <p>In response to a COVID-19 case among staff or students, follow COVID-19 exclusion criteria; work with local health department to identify and exclude close contacts following NJDOH guidance; refer to guidance on cleaning and disinfection.</p> <p>In response to ill students and staff, follow NJDOH School Exclusion List</p> <p>* If ill person had potential exposure in past 14 days, follow COVID-19 exclusion criteria; wait at least 24 hours and clean/disinfect areas where ill person spent time.</p> <p>Permit limited activities involving interaction with multiple cohorts, ensuring adherence to precautions.</p>	<p>Consider a mixture of remote and/or hybrid learning approaches, and/or fully remote learning.</p> <p>In response to a COVID-19 case among staff or students, follow COVID-19 exclusion criteria; work with local health department to identify and exclude close contacts following NJDOH guidance; refer to guidance on cleaning and disinfection.</p> <p>In response to ill students and staff with COVID-19 compatible symptoms, follow COVID-19 exclusion criteria; wait at least 24 hours and clean/disinfect areas where ill person spent time.</p> <p>Minimize activities that involve interaction with multiple cohorts.</p>	<p>Consider implementing fully remote learning.</p> <p><i>If schools remain open for in-person learning:</i></p> <p>In response to staff or student who is a COVID-19 case <u>or who has COVID-19 compatible symptoms (not yet tested)</u>, follow COVID-19 exclusion criteria; work with local health department to identify and exclude close contacts following NJDOH guidance; refer to guidance on cleaning and disinfection.</p> <p>* Decisions on when ill person's close contacts can return to school are dependent on the ill person's medical evaluation and COVID-19 test results.</p> <p>Restrict activities that involve interaction with multiple cohorts.</p>	<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Recommend fully remote learning¹</p>

Steps taken in December and January to re-evaluate our in-person program:

- Engagement of our secondary students in feedback groups to best gauge the student experience.
- Re-examination of our daily, weekly instructional and cohort schedules by multiple educators.
- Planning and preparation for the implementation of teacher professional development to refine our hybrid instructional practices.
- Secondary families asked to re-commit to either in-person hybrid or all-remote learning in order to reassess cohort structure.



Other information sharing opportunities:

- Feedback taken from tellus@livingston.org and lpvirtual@livingston.org.
- Conducted a joint forum with the Board of Education and the Town Council on December 16th. Lou Anello, our local Health Official, answered questions and provided some important information.
- Dr. Block met with members of our Parent-Teacher Council on December 18th.
- Dr. Block attended the Town Council Meeting on December 21st to speak about our work to keep schools open.
- Tonight's forum.



Cohorting by the numbers:

Students Participating In Person:

Elementary In-Person September 30, 2020	Elementary In-Person December 23, 2020	Secondary In-Person October 30, 2020	Secondary In-Person December 23, 2020
68%	63%	74%	60%

While we have seen a drop off of in-person students at all levels, it has been much more significant at the secondary level providing some flexibility in cohorting.



Cohorting by the numbers:

District-Wide Student Capacity for Average Classroom:

<u>Elementary</u>	<u>Secondary</u>
12-14 Students (Plus Staff)	11-13 Students (Plus Staff)

- This accounts for average classroom spaces. Special education spaces and “specials” spaces vary.
- Capacity in some classrooms (specifically in specialized programs) have additional staff.

Based on Current December In-Person Selections:

Approximately 40 elementary general education homerooms district-wide (35%) would be too large for one cohort, based on six feet of physical distancing.



New Registrations:

We have seen an uptick in new registrations for students to the district. At this time last year (December/January) we had 11 new registrations as compared to 32 this year.

<u>New Students Elementary</u>	<u>New Students Secondary</u>
24	8
14 Remote - 10 Hybrid	3 Remote - 5 Hybrid

- These new registrations have an impact on class size and transportation. We don't know if this trend will continue.
- Bussing is another consideration as we re-cohort.



What We Have Learned - General:

- Through our latest commitment form we learned that 40% of secondary students plan to remain fully remote into the second half of the school year (70% of families completed form, we proactively followed up with the remaining 30%).
- The virus is seriously impacting staffing. There are still many teachers on leave, quarantined, sick, or working from home and will need to teach remotely. The majority of our teachers are here every day and are doing amazing work.
- DOH quarantine parameters are adjusting, and new guidelines were issued before winter break. While quarantine period remains 14 days, school districts can be more selective in quarantining if social distancing can be confirmed.



What We Have Learned - Student Focus Group Highlights:

- Students believe they are meeting the requirements of their classes.
- Consistent appreciation for the work their teachers are doing.
- Concern over time on Zoom in-class and time on the same computer in same space for homework. “Zoom fatigue.” Balancing school and homework.
- Report a desire for more individual contact/conferencing. Also, allowing for more feedback.
- Want more personal connection with teachers.
- Refine our Office Hours to meet needs of all students.



What We Have Learned - Student Focus Group Highlights:

- While students understand the number of periods in a day is necessary to keep classes moving. Some struggle with the difference between AM and PM classes, others do not. The structure of these classes are different.
- School community greatly values the independent time and weekly asynchronous afternoons.
- Students miss the rotation. Many classes in one day.
- Students feeling they are not seeing many students when in school.
- Student feeling that they are on Zoom too much in school.



What We Have Learned - Faculty Focus Group Highlights:

- Staff members also report a desire for more individual contact/conferencing time.
- Many teachers expressed challenges in getting students to attend office hours or the number of students who come to office hours at the same time.
- Teachers miss the rotation.
- Teachers would like to do more instruction off of the Zoom, particularly when students are in person.



GOING FORWARD SECONDARY

- Reduction of cohorts to two cohorts will provide additional frequency for students to be in school facilities or in-person learning more often.
- New HS schedule to include fewer, extended daily class periods, giving teachers additional opportunities to conference with individuals and small groups, provide feedback, and work with in-person students in a more hands-on way.
- New MS schedule likely to keep classes a bit shorter based in feedback.
- Continued focus on balance and social and emotional wellness.
- Maintain and expand capacity for asynchronous and independent practice during the period.



GOING FORWARD SECONDARY - PROCESS

- Adjusted Hybrid Learning Plan to take effect February 1, 2021 to begin the second half of the school year. End of semester logical “pivot point” for students and teachers.
- Currently vetting ideas through teacher, student, and parent groups to refine plans based on feedback.
- As our third major shift this year, we will focus on planning and professional development for the new model to be delivered in the coming weeks.
- Principals hoping to share details of the secondary school hybrid schedule adjustments by early next week. This needs to be a thoughtful and deliberate process, with input from students and staff. Each school schedule may be somewhat different.

GOING FORWARD ELEMENTARY

- Plan to remain open in current cohort schedule as long as we are at Orange, “High Risk” designation. May move to one cohort sooner if there is a significant change in in-person population that allows for continued six foot distancing in classrooms.
- Continue to work on plans to maximize in-person learning time when designation changes to “Yellow” or “Green” or population reduces.



GOING FORWARD ELEMENTARY

- Elementary principals and supervisors are looking for new ways to engage our in-person students in more active, hands-on learning when they are in the school building.
- They will be working with teachers to further enhance the in-person experience at the elementary level.



THE PIVOT CONTINUES

Since this past summer, we have discussed the need to “pivot” this school year as circumstances and guidance changes related to the pandemic.

We have pivoted several times from remote, to hybrid, and have made multiple adjustments to our hybrid model.

We will need to continue to pivot for the remainder of the school year.

It is our sincere hope that, with the help of the vaccine and spring weather, the final months of the school year will begin looking more like we remember school and want school to be.

We ARE listening to feedback and adjusting based on our experiences.



Questions?

