



Fall 2021 Return: Starting Strong

School Committee Meeting | June 8, 2021



Goals & Commitments

- Finish this school year better than we started.
- Support students as they transition from a Covid schooling experience to a more typical schooling experience.
- A strong, fully in-person start of the school year in September 2021.



Successes & Challenges this Spring

Successes	Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Educators & staff continue to shine for our students● Successful school openings thanks to <i>so many people</i>● In-person social interactions● “Wonderful, delightful, joyous”● Strong step to Fall 2021 return● Operationalized recommendations from WG at each school level	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Social emotional needs & mental health supports● Staffing these models● Pick-up / drop-off / parking● Fostering connection for students learning remotely● Demands & complications of the day; lunch



Looking Ahead to Fall 2021

- “Fall 2021 school reopening: For the fall, all districts and schools will be required to be in-person, full-time, five days a week, and all DESE health and safety requirements will be lifted. This includes all physical distancing requirements. We will collaborate with the Department of Public Health (DPH) to issue any additional health and safety recommendations over the summer (e.g., masks for elementary school students). We will provide any updates to districts and schools as we receive them.” (DESE, 2021, p. 1)
- “Districts will no longer be able to offer remote learning as a standard learning model.” (DESE, 2021, p. 4)
- “Pathways that existed prior to the pandemic for offering virtual learning to individual students in limited cases will remain available to districts and schools. These include home/hospital tutoring programs due to a documented medical condition” (DESE, 2021, p. 4)

Source: DESE. (2021, May 27). [Updates to DESE COVID-19 Guidance](#)



Future Guidance & Metrics

- Continue to monitor and operationalize:
 - Updates from the Commissioner
 - Additional K-12 guidance from DESE, CDC, etc.

- Continue to monitor:
 - Health metrics
 - Vaccination rates



Policy Development

- The School Department and the School Committee will continue to collaborate with the Belmont Board of Health and Belmont Public School's Nursing Department to operationalize policies in line with CDC & DESE guidance.
 - Mask policy
 - Social distancing policy
 - Testing protocols
 - Vaccination Updates



Robust Supports for a Full In-Person Return

Belmont Public Schools anticipates receiving one-time federal funds to support the following key priorities:

- Supporting social emotional well-being (for students & adults)
- Supporting students and families transitioning from remote to in-person learning
- Supporting academics

Note: Funding has not been confirmed. If provided, funding might be available for 1-2 years.



Possible Supports for a Robust Full In-Person Start

The Working Group brainstormed possible investments in three key priority areas:

- **Social emotional well-being**
 - Continue partnering with McLean and other organizations to access and support best practices
 - Explore investments in roles such as Director of DEI, social workers and/or additional school counselors
 - Support strong communication between schools and families
 - Incorporate mindfulness and other strategies for navigating transitions, anxiety, etc.
- **Remote → in-person transitions**
 - Specialized orientation sessions
 - Strong focus on team-building and community, especially at the beginning of the year
 - Continued communication with remote and formerly-remote families to support transition
- **Academics**
 - Summer programming tailored to each grade level
 - Explore opportunities for peer tutoring, peer mentoring, and additional time for academic support and instruction.