



THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF
PHILADELPHIA

SCHOOL YEAR 2020-2021:

CHARTING A PATH FORWARD... TOGETHER.

JUNE 2020



CONTRIBUTING ORGANIZATIONS:

The Accenture logo, consisting of a purple chevron symbol pointing to the right, positioned above the word "accenture" in a bold, black, lowercase sans-serif font.

TO OUR SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PHILADELPHIA COMMUNITY:

These have been difficult times. The persistent threat and impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the ongoing impact of institutionalized racism are two of the most challenging crises we are facing as individuals, as a school community, and as a city. The best way to work through a crisis is together...and together is how we will move forward.

Looking ahead to the upcoming school year, we must make some important decisions about what school will look like and how our students will experience learning. We are approaching this work thoughtfully, collaboratively and with an enormous sense of responsibility. We will be guided by a core set of principles that reflect our highest priorities: the health and safety of our students and employees, the consistent delivery of high-quality educational experiences for all students and the engagement of our School District community. Your input is essential. We are creating opportunities throughout the process for our parents, families, students, employees, and other members of our school communities to help inform a final plan that keeps the safety and shared interests of our whole community in mind.

We are doing all of this in the context of a future that is highly uncertain. The progress of testing and vaccine development, the evolution of the coronavirus, shifting expectations around wearing masks and physical distancing, and policies from federal, state and local governments are ever changing. That means we must be nimble in our ability to plan for and adapt to those changing circumstances. We are committed to doing just that.

Our initial planning includes three scenarios -- in-person learning, digital learning and a hybrid learning model. We are in daily contact with public health experts and other leaders from across the city and country who are sharing best practices and expanding our thinking as we consider the many complexities of how daily school operations, academics, school safety protocols, student transportation, meal service, employee policies, and much more will need to change to promote safe and inclusive environments for everyone. That includes supporting the very real social-emotional needs our students and employees will have as a result of this pandemic and addressing all forms of inequity across our District.

There is still much work to do. **Our goal is to share a final plan in July so our District and our families can prepare for a successful and safe school year.**

We will keep you informed of our thinking along the way. I also encourage you to visit www.philasd.org/2020schoolstart for the latest information about this important work. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Bill

William R. Hite, Jr., Ed.D.
Superintendent



TABLE OF CONTENTS:

PAGE			
4	END STATE GOAL & GUIDING PRINCIPLES	9	LEARNING MODELS & OPERATIONS
5	APPROACH & ORGANIZATION	14	WORKFORCE CONSIDERATIONS
6	INPUT & ENGAGEMENT	16	TIMELINE
7	HEALTH & SAFETY		



OUR END STATE GOAL & GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

The School District of Philadelphia is working to ensure that the restart of school is safe, includes families and employees in the process, and prioritizes student achievement, high-quality instruction and the health and well-being of all. Across this work, our planning and decision process is being aided by the below guiding principles.



Health and safety → The District will do everything possible to safeguard the health, safety, and well-being of its students, employees, and community-at-large. Planning and decision making will be guided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), PA Department of Education, and Philadelphia Department of Public Health guidelines and doctors and public health experts from the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia.

Continuous high-quality instruction → The District will deliver high-quality instruction seamlessly to all students across in-person and digital environments to support student growth and achievement.

Educational equity → The District will provide all students with access to quality grade-level instruction and social emotional support, with a focus on removing and ending racist practices.

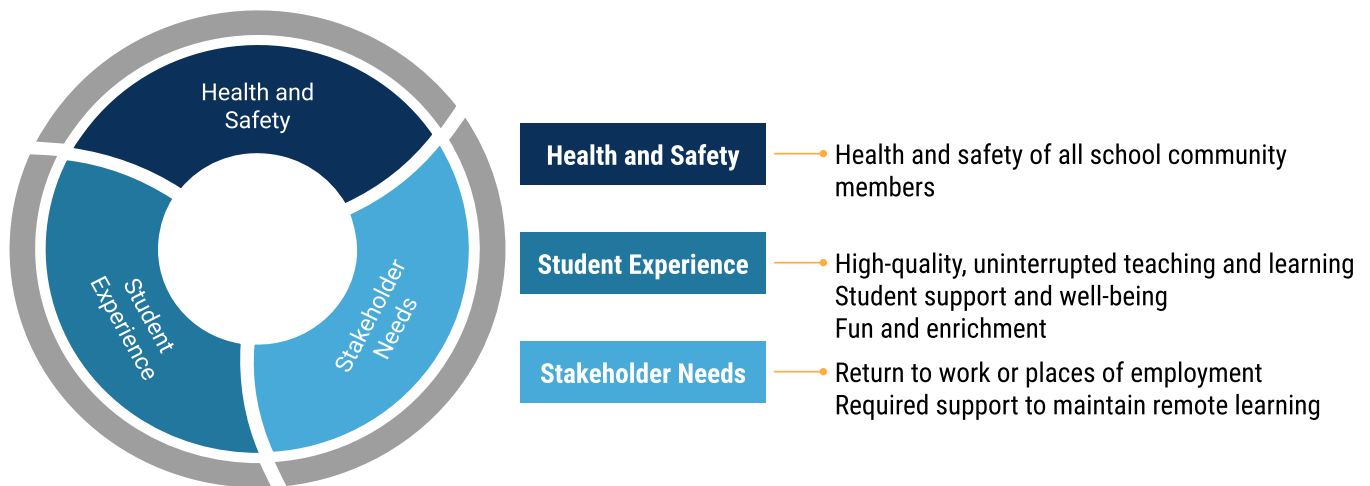
Data-driven decision making → The District will use data and expert analysis to inform decision making and build trust amongst all stakeholders. Our decisions will be informed by students, employees, and school community members.

Flexibility → With the uncertainty and changing landscape, the District's plan will build in flexibility so we're prepared to adjust based on the needs of stakeholders and changes necessitated by medical circumstances and public health guidance.

Accurate and timely communication → The District will ensure that students, employees, and families have the information they need to be safe and keep all stakeholders up to date with important information throughout the school year.

APPROACH & ORGANIZATION:

As school starts in the fall, it is critical that we do everything possible to ensure the health and safety of all school community members, strive to provide the best academic experience for students, and consider the needs of families and stakeholders. It's through these three lenses that we are approaching our work and considering options for school year 2020-2021.



The District's planning process is structured around seven working groups that are considering all aspects of restarting schools to develop available options, determine feasibility, and identify required dependencies.

Working Groups

Health and Safety — Protocols including social distancing, protective equipment testing and screening, tracking and reporting, and training.

Academics — Core instructional program, instructional practices, and technology integration

Employee Policies and Supports — Policies, training and support, and staffing needs for instructional models and employee wellness.

Communications — Practices to keep students, families, and staff informed and engaged

Facilities — Cleaning schedule and practices and building improvement project site protocols based on public health guidance

Transportation and Food Services — Service scenarios and cleaning practices based on instructional models

School Operations and Supports — Academic calendar, school schedules, and social-emotional support

Dependencies

- Health data
- Funding
- Workforce
- Agency guidance

INPUT & ENGAGEMENT:

Feedback from our stakeholders is an essential part of our planning and will be gathered in three ways.

An online survey will launch in June to help us better understand what worked well with digital learning this year, what needs to improve, and what conditions, practices, and protocols are most important to you as we consider a safe return to our school buildings. The survey reflects the range of initial options we are exploring, which are included in the sections to follow. Your feedback will help us prioritize and refine these options. We will also host Virtual Town Halls to gain additional feedback from the community before our plans are finalized, as well as create opportunities for stakeholders to share input and feedback via email and phone.



HEALTH & SAFETY:

School buildings must be safe places to learn and offices must be safe places to work. With health and safety foremost in mind, we are committed to the development of a safe and meaningful restarting process that fully aligns with the guidance provided by the CDC, the Philadelphia Department of Public Health, the Pennsylvania Department of Education, and is informed by many other local, state, and national health and safety organizations. Medical Officer Dr. Barbara Klock will lead our COVID-19 health and safety response and coordinate with administrators and public health officials on health-related decisions. The District will take proactive and intentional approaches to support the health, well-being, and safety of all members of its community. This includes the careful review, exploration, and adjustment of policies, practices, and systems in the following key areas:

Social Distancing

Social distancing has two main components:

1. Keeping individuals at a safe distance from one another (6 feet)
2. Minimizing the number of face-to-face interactions.

Examples of how we're planning to implement this include:

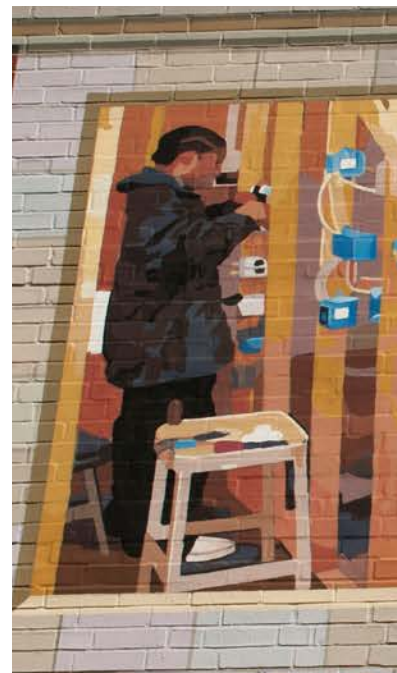
- Markings and signage will be posted on floors and walls to ensure that students and employees remain six feet apart when waiting to enter the building, standing in line for elevators, walking in hallways, etc.
- Adjustments will be made to seating and desks, when necessary, to allow for employees to maintain a six-foot distance when completing work.
- In-person class size will be reduced and adjustments to seating/desks will be made in support of social distancing practices when feasible.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and Hygiene Protocols

The District plans to procure and distribute personal protective equipment for students and employees to use when in buildings. This equipment will include a mask, hand sanitizer, thermometers, and gloves. Guidance will be provided to employees regarding the specific PPE needed based on their role and responsibilities. All PPE will be purchased centrally and delivered to locations before students and employees restart school and work.

Examples of safety and hygiene protocols include:

- All students and employees will be required to wear a mask that covers their mouth and nose at all times.
- Daily cleaning protocols will be established to ensure that workplaces, workstations, equipment and facilities are clean.
- Hand sanitizer stations will be installed in common areas.





Daily Entry Questionnaire

We're planning to have students and employees be required to complete a daily questionnaire to assess if they are experiencing symptoms or have been exposed to COVID-19. The results of the questionnaire will determine if the individual should go to school/work or stay remote. Conducting regular screenings for symptoms and ongoing self-monitoring will help reduce exposure.

Suspected/ Confirmed COVID-19 Cases

We will follow the guidance of the Philadelphia Department of Public Health (PDPH) in our response to a positive diagnosis. If we receive confirmation that a student or employee has had a positive COVID-19 diagnosis, prompt action will be taken by immediately contacting the Philadelphia Department of Public Health and following their directions regarding possible quarantine (or isolation), contact tracing, communication to families and or with the media, and facility disinfection.

Contact Tracing

The Philadelphia Health Department's Office of Acute Communicable Disease will conduct all contact tracking.

Immunization Requirements

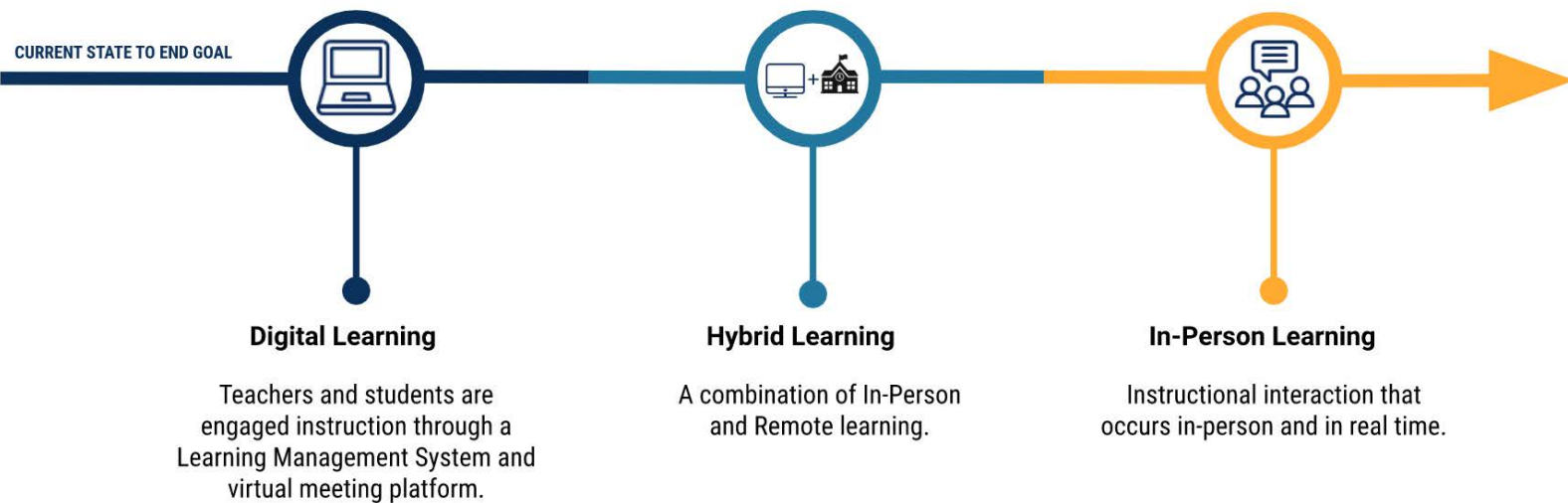
At this time, the Pennsylvania Department of Health's immunization requirements for the 2020-2021 school year remain in place.

Health and Safety Training

We acknowledge that "Return Anxiety" exists for many members of our school community. Our students, educators, and support staff all need to feel safe and supported in order to learn, teach, and work. Our intent is to foster a sense of safety and confidence by ensuring they have the resources necessary to return to work and school. This means taking active steps to develop and launch comprehensive training and resources so students and employees know what to expect as we restart school and work. All students and employees will be required to participate in virtual training to support the use of health and safety measures. Virtual training will also be offered to parents/guardians through Family Academy.

LEARNING MODELS & OPERATIONS:

The focus of the Schools Office is to deliver high-quality instruction seamlessly to all students across in-person and digital environments. We recognize that while most students have been engaged in digital learning, students have been away from what they once knew as “school” so we are preparing for procedures that will address the social and academic needs of students. As we look ahead to restarting in the fall, we are planning operations that will support three learning models: Digital Learning, Hybrid Learning, and In-person learning. Across these three learning models, we will be able to proceed towards In-person Learning or revert towards Digital Learning as needed based on the current health conditions and data at a given time. These models include:



Digital Learning

We continue to learn about how to best support our students and employees in a digital learning environment, including working with partnerships to identify and address families in need of internet access and provide low-to-no cost options to support digital learning. Though we are targeting to open our doors in the fall, we acknowledge that there’s a possibility that digital learning will continue or be introduced throughout the year.

Hybrid Learning

As buildings begin to re-open their doors, a hybrid model is a method to ease back into in-person instruction. In-person teaching will focus on topics best taught in the classroom, while virtual teaching will focus on topics that can be best learned on-line.

In-Person Learning

The District recognizes the importance to get back to school. Having all students, teachers, and employees back is our end-state goal.

Based on current public health guidance, the District is primarily focused on restarting schools with a hybrid learning model. This will limit the number of people physically present in a building at any time to accommodate social distancing. It also supports the need for some students and adults to remain remote due to pre-existing conditions or health concerns. A hybrid learning model may be different across schools depending on the physical size of the building, number of students enrolled, grade configuration, or the number of students who need to be prioritized for in-person instruction. Input and feedback will inform instructional programming.

HYBRID LEARNING MODEL - SCHEDULES UNDER CONSIDERATION

Within the hybrid learning model, we are exploring several options of what this learning model could look like, including the possibility of having a staggered/split schedule and phasing-in students and employees, as described below.

Key:

In-Person (IP)

Remote Learning (RL)

Split Schedule

- **AM/PM Schedule** - Students come to the school building each day, but in shifts.

Student Groups	Monday		Tuesday		Wednesday		Thursday		Friday	
	AM	PM	AM	PM	AM	PM	AM	PM	AM	PM
Group A	RL	IP	RL	IP	RL	IP	RL	IP	RL	IP
Group B	IP	RL	IP	RL	IP	RL	IP	RL	IP	RL

- **Day A/ Day B Schedule** - Students come to the school building on alternate days in shifts.

Student Groups	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Group A	IP	RL	IP	RL	IP
Group B	RL	IP	RL	IP	RL

- **Week A/ Week B Schedule** - Students come to the school building on alternate weeks in shifts.

Student Groups	Week 1					Week 2				
	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Group A	IP	IP	IP	IP	IP	RL	RL	RL	RL	RL
Group B	RL	RL	RL	RL	RL	IP	IP	IP	IP	IP

In addition to split schedules, the District is also looking at phasing students and employees back into buildings.

Phase-In

Certain students come back to the school building first for in-person classes while other students continue with digital learning. For example, Pre-K through third-grade students could restart at school first, while middle school students continue digital learning until social distancing guidelines are relaxed and high school students continue digital learning indefinitely.

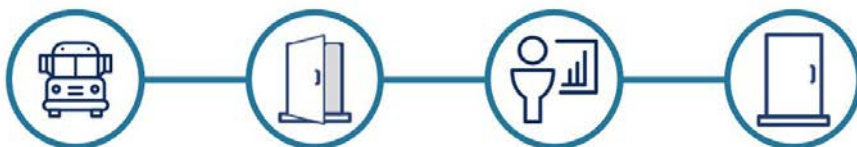
In grouping students together for scheduling purposes, the District is currently exploring a cohort model where the same students are together to the longest extent possible to limit the number of interactions. The District is currently planning to prioritize the following groups for in-person learning, as they experience the greatest challenges in a digital learning environment:

- **Complex Need Students**, such as Autistic Support, Occupational Therapy/Physical Therapy, Deaf/Hard of Hearing
- **English Learners** including Newcomers, Level 1, and Level 2
- **Pre-Kindergarten - Grade 6**

OPERATIONS

As we think about day-to-day school operation across all levels, our approach is grounded in students' well-being and safety with a high level of care. The District may review the 2020-2021 school calendar to ensure that there is ample time to train employees and rehearse "school opening" processes aligned to the health, wellness, and safety needs of students and employees. Once the school year begins, a transitional period is being considered that places less emphasis on academics in order to address the social emotional needs of students and adults.

The District approaches the day-to-day school operations by looking at 1) going to school, 2) entering school, 3) being inside the school, and 4) leaving school.





Going to School

We understand and are planning for students to arrive at school in multiple ways, and that arrival varies depending upon District transportation policies. Once students leave their homes, it is the expectation that they arrive safely to school and ready to learn.

The Office of Transportation is proposing clear and defined plans and protocols for students who receive transportation, including a three-tiered bus schedule proposal that begins the runs at 7:20 am, 8:20 am, 9:20 am.

The three-tiered bus schedule will maintain the required Pennsylvania Department of Education instructional hours and will adhere to the health and safety guidelines and social distancing with approximately 33 students per vehicle. The safety plan will include assigned seating (one child per bench or two children if living in the same household) and revised loading and unloading plans. If adopted, the three-tiered bus schedule will align to the proposed teaching and learning models and will impact school start and end times.

In addition, we expect there may be an increase in families taking their child to and from school. As a result, we will establish plans for an increased number of cars in drop off areas around school campuses. The Office of Transportation will provide training for its employees focused on and not limited to, safety guidelines, PPE, loading and unloading procedures.



Entering School

Schools will need to prepare for pre-designated entry and exit pathways and doors for entering and exiting school buildings, focused on safety measures for students and employees as individuals enter and go through the buildings. Students and employees will have to practice social distancing and remaining 6 feet apart to the maximum extent possible. Current plans include marking floors with removable tape to designate a one-way traffic flow and identifying 6 feet distances for students waiting to enter the building.





Being Inside the School

Prior to school opening, schools will complete individual school asset maps to closely examine their facility's infrastructure. Schools will think about safety measures for front offices, hallways, lunchrooms, monitoring of restrooms and other parts of the school to minimize the number of students and employees in these areas at any given time.

Classroom floor plans will be reviewed to maximize distance between students during face-to-face instruction, including students facing the same direction rather than students facing each other and students' desks being 6 feet apart to the maximum extent possible.

School leaders will consider the use of cafeterias, gymnasiums, libraries and other larger spaces as classroom space to help minimize the number of students in the classrooms. Additional considerations include using dividers to separate classrooms within larger spaces.

The District is also considering recess and the use of outdoor spaces in the planning process. This could include modified recess schedules and incorporating social distancing activities which promote physical exercise but do not allow for shared equipment.

Regardless of the learning model or schedule, all students will receive breakfast and lunch. For students entering school in the morning, our current thinking is that students will be offered a grab-and-go breakfast at the door, which will then be eaten in the classroom. For students in school during lunch, students will socially distance in line and either eat in the cafeteria with social distancing markers outlined or eat in their classroom. Students engaged in digital learning can receive a box of breakfast and lunch meals to enjoy at home.

Due to the health and safety guidelines and COVID-19 protocols, we understand changes to meal procedures will require additional cleaning of desks, trash pick up, signage across the school, and more employees to support the model.



Leaving the School

Schools will need to consider staggered dismissal times to promote social distancing and management of school buses, car pick-up, Out of School Time providers, athletic programs, and extra curricular programs consistent with the Philadelphia Health Department requirements.

Overall, the daily operations will be driven by the health and safety guidelines outlined by the CDC, PA Department of Education, Philadelphia Department of Public Health, and doctors and public health experts from the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, with input from stakeholders.

PRIORITIZING SOCIAL EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING OF STUDENTS

We know that restarting at school after many months away will require time to address the social emotional needs of students. We are considering proposing additional time before restarting school to allow teachers and staff time for re-entry and provide training so they can recognize signs of trauma and identify students who need support.

WORKFORCE CONSIDERATIONS

The District is committed to ensuring our employees feel safe and supported during this difficult time and have access to clear and consistent expectations and communications. As such, the re-opening plan includes various components related to four main areas, each guided by the Philadelphia Department of public health and the CDC: 1) policies and procedures, 2) training and support, 3) staffing needs, and 4) employee wellness.

Policies and Procedures

Unprecedented times call for new ways of working and responsibilities, and as such, we are reviewing, revising, and adding new policies and procedures. This includes:

Health and Safety Guidelines

- Health and Safety come first - these protocols will be enforced to do everything possible to ensure everyone is kept safe and secure.

Attendance, Leave, and Accommodations Policies

- This involves updating existing policies to ensure there is flexibility and support for employees through each learning model.

Evaluation Protocols

- The District must ensure that educators receive ongoing feedback in any learning model that is compliant with the state law and supportive of different learning models.

Work from Home Policy

- We are exploring flexible work models to allow employees to maintain productivity and service to students regardless of the phase of re-entry into the workplace.

Training and Support

The District must prepare employees for the new approaches to teaching and learning, and is planning to do so through digital training. These trainings include Leading and Teaching in a New Model, Health and Safety, and others as needed.





Staffing and Coverage

The key to all of the work that we do in service of students and families is our tremendous employees. What our employees have been able to accomplish during this trying time has been heroic and without precedent. To that end, the restarting plan must ensure that:

There is a clear plan to bring employees back.

- The District is exploring a tiered approach, with a goal of slowly increasing the number of employees returning to buildings, starting with designated Essential Employees and eventually phasing to all employees..

There is adequate staffing to accomplish the work at hand.

- We have issued a survey to understand employees' willingness to return. Everyone has unique circumstances, and we will use the results of this survey to project staffing models and need for additional employees.

Work schedule changes are explored to support a new way of working.

- The District will provide flexible work schedules to support social distancing. Example approaches include staggered hours or days where the employee is onsite.

Employee Wellness

The District acknowledges the need to be flexible and supportive of employees' unique needs during this time. We recognize that we cannot be at our best for the students we serve if we are not taking care of ourselves. We are working to ensure employees are supported and have access to various resources to address their mental health needs through the District's Employee Assistance Program. In addition to clear policies and existing benefits, the District is providing all employees a 1-year subscription to digital wellness activities and advice.

TIMELINE

Our goal is to share a final plan that reflects stakeholder input in July so our District and our families can prepare for a successful and safe 2020-2021 school year.

- Stakeholder survey and virtual sessions
- CDC guidelines for reopening schools
- Philadelphia Health Department review of all procedures and practices for resuming teaching and learning
- PA plan for reopening schools
- City of Philadelphia reopening plan
- Preliminary Reopening Framework
- Implement plan to resume teaching and learning
- Professional development for all staff
- Supply distribution to schools
- Second stakeholder survey to gain input before school opens
- Third stakeholder Survey to determine satisfaction level with school opening efforts

May

June

July

August

September

October

- Initial stakeholder reopening meetings
- Formation of working groups
- Coordination meetings begin with City, SEPTA, PDE, Council of Great City School Superintendents
- Virtual student and parent engagement sessions
- Began bulk supply ordering of personal protective equipment

- Public meetings to gain additional stakeholder input
- PDE required Health and Safety plan Board of Education adoption
- Final plan to resume teaching and learning in SY20-21

- Begin SY20-21 with care and attention to emotional wellness of students and staff