



# High School Working Group Update and Draft Recommendation

School Committee 11-16-20

# Agenda

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1. Overview of Working Group, Student Feedback, Goal
2. Explore Obstacles Identified and Solutions
3. Connect District Research
4. Working Group Draft Recommendation for Expanded In-Person Learning
5. Identify Steps Needed for Implementation
6. Identify Recommended Immediate Steps

# High School Working Group

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- Includes school committee, administrators, staff, parents, teachers, students,
- Formed early October, multiple meetings each week
- Collaborative work and engagement
- Student, staff and family surveys, focus groups, district model research and deep dives, study of obstacles
- Shared focus on student voice, equity, and continuity of school-year program



# Centering Voices of Our Students

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- Student surveys completed week of 10/19
  - 2,573 responses
  - 62.3% - North, 69.9% - South
- Diverse focus groups at both schools with teacher and student facilitators
- Analysis of survey responses, including open-ended questions and focus group reports
- Learning from students in other communities and in-person models



# Key Messages from Students

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- Emphasis on health, wellbeing, peer connection & engagement
- Low satisfaction, high stress and unsustainability of current model
- Most students want more in-person opportunities, and there is a wide range of opinions
- Desire to maintain current course assignments, class groupings & curricular diversity
- Concern about length of academic classes and need for more breaks
- Concern regarding safety of in-person learning opportunities and protocols is common



# Staff Surveys and Focus Groups

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- Shared priority on student social & emotional well being and engaging teaching
- Shared priority to maintain current course assignments, class groupings & curricular diversity
- Concerns about Covid health & safety, ability of others to follow 4 health pillars, & building ventilation
- High levels of stress, but also slightly higher rating of sustainability of current model
- Current in-person staff concern that new schedule will disrupt vulnerable populations already in the building
- Interest in maintaining instructional time
- Concern about ability to transition from distance to in-person

# Parent and Family Feedback

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- Shared priority on student social & emotional well being and engaging teaching
- Shared priority to maintain current course assignments, class groupings & curricular diversity
- Higher priority on challenging academics than other groups
- Emphasis on the importance of expanding in-person learning
- Desire for creative solutions for in-person learning
- General concerns about Covid health & safety



# Working Group Goal

- Based on social and emotional priorities expressed by students, develop a plan to ensure every student who wants to have in-person learning opportunities can do so
- Based on concern for safety and academic continuity expressed by students, staff and families, develop a plan that is carefully crafted and sustainable
- Respond to the urgency of need expressed by many students without being reckless or disrupting existing academic strengths





# Obstacles and Solutions

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## Obstacles to Hybrid Identified

1. Staff Remote Accommodations
2. Space Constraints
3. Distance-Only Model

All three obstacles need to be addressed to implement NPS proposed hybrid or other hybrid model

# Impact of Staff Remote Accommodations by Department

- 108 high school staff total approved for remote accommodation as of September, due to personal or family health conditions.

Remote accommodations by school & department*	
NNHS - 35 teachers	NSHS - 40 teachers
Math - 5	Math - 12
Science - 6	Science - 6
History - 7	History - 2
English - 5	English - 2
World Language - 4	World Language - 7
Special Education - 4	Special Education - 7
Other - 4	Other - 4

\*Does not include counselors, aides and other non-classroom staff. Accommodations will be updated by November 30th.



# Impact of Staff Remote Accommodations by Period

Due to remote accommodations, significant numbers of students each period would not have in-person teachers assigned.

## **NNHS - Number of students without in-person teachers**

Block	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
# Stus Impacted	340	390	404	344	290	430	475

## **NSHS - Number of students without in-person teachers**

Block	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
# Stus Impacted	383	462	367	463	406	358	392

These students need a designated, supervised common space (eg cafeteria, field house) to attend remote classes.



# Solutions to Remote Accommodation Obstacle

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- Review staff accommodations and consider alternatives to fully remote teaching assignments
  - Staff accommodations are recertified per ADA, and will be updated by 11/30. Number of accommodations may change.
- Increase the number of cohorts in order to decrease students connecting remotely from common spaces each block
  - 2 cohorts - Max. of ~240 students per block\*
  - 3 cohorts - Max. of ~160 students per block\*
  - 4 cohorts - Max. of ~120 students per block\*
- Ensure Wifi bandwidth for large scale remote instruction

\*Includes distance-only cohort. Decrease by 15% assuming similar distance-only participation

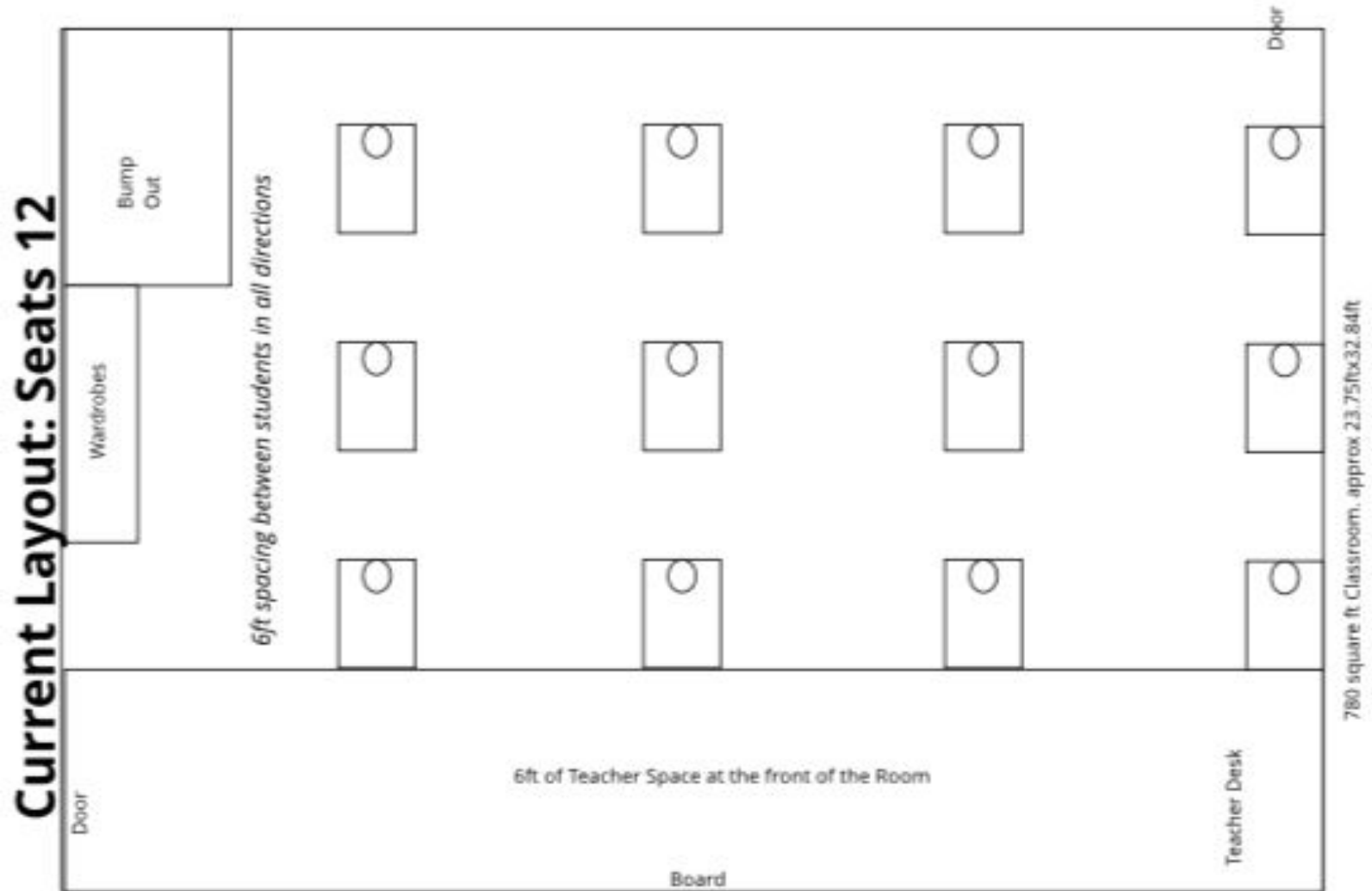


# High School Space Concerns

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- **High percentage planning to attend in person**
  - 85% of students/families selected hybrid learning model (Compared with 75% K-8 students/families)
- **Large class sizes in many subjects/classes**
  - Classes greater than 25: NSHS-112, NNHS-136
  - Creating evenly split cohorts of each class is not possible
- **With 6-foot distancing requirement, many classrooms have 12 student maximum**
- **Significant high needs population requiring larger spaces**

# Classroom Space Limitations

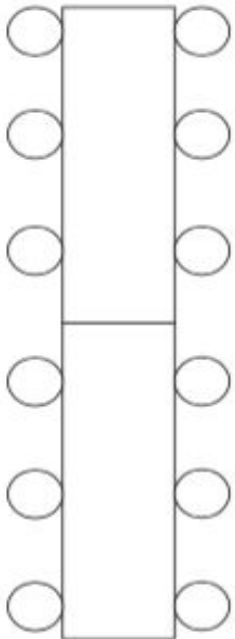




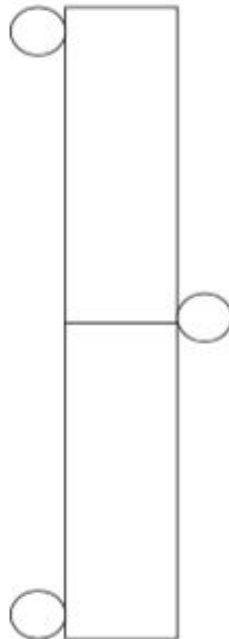
# Common Area Limitations

## Long Cafeteria Tables: 12 ft x 3 ft

Pre-Covid:  
Capacity equals 12



During Covid:  
Capacity equals 3



- NNHS Cafeteria - 105
- NNHS Auditorium - 115
- NSHS Cafeteria - 100
- NSHS Auditorium - 45
- Additional use of gyms, libraries, field houses w flexible furniture



# Solutions to Space Obstacles

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- Increase number of cohorts in order to decrease students attending, particularly for our largest classes
  - Consider students in smaller classes, such as Career and Tech Ed (CTE) and College Prep (CP) courses, attending more frequently
- Increase student seating for classrooms once public health conditions allow

# Distance-Only Challenge in Hybrid

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- No equitable distance-only learning model initially identified to parallel proposed hybrid model
- Specific high school challenges to running parallel distance-only and hybrid programs:
  - Career and Technical Ed. program
  - Specialized courses
  - AP courses
  - Diverse elective offerings
  - Small learning communities

# Solution to Distance-Only Obstacle

Consider implementation of Hybrid Flexible (HyFlex)/  
Synchronous Hybrid model (“Live stream teaching”)

## Benefits

- Creates parallel distance-only access to all classes
- Allows all students to simultaneously engage in all class sessions
- Currently utilized in some peer district high schools to facilitate distance-only access
- Common in higher education with specially designed classrooms

## Challenges

- Requires designing lessons for separate cohorts of students simultaneously
- Encourages use of technology when in-person; limits instructional options for educators
- Additional challenges to address include school bandwidth capacity, supplemental audio/visual technology, teacher preparation, sustainability

# Applying District Research

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Key insights on hybrid schedules from peer district high schools

- More students struggle to stay engaged academically in complex schedules
- Crucial to maintain tiered intervention and support mechanisms
- Simpler schedules benefit all students
- HyFlex allows distance-only access
- HyFlex incredibly challenging for faculty; nearly doubles teaching workload
- Time for faculty planning is critical
- Full day hybrid options are working safely
- Longer blocks support public health, technology integration, and have academic strengths

# Draft Hybrid Recommendation

- Utilize current full-day distance schedule framework
- Adjust blocks to 80 mins to allow time for transition
- In-person cohorts 4 days per week
- Fully remote students and students not in-person engage in all classes through HyFlex teaching model
- Create 3 or 4 cohorts to address space and staffing obstacles
  - Can be adapted to 2 cohorts if conditions change

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
A (80 mins) 9:15-10:35	E (80 mins) 9:15-10:35	A (35 mins) 9:15-9:50	A (80 mins) 9:15-10:35	E (80 mins) 9:15-10:35
B (80 mins) 10:40-12:00	Community (30 mins) 10:40-11:10	B (35 mins) 9:55-10:30	B (80 mins) 10:40-12:00	Community (30 mins) 10:40-11:10
C (80 mins+30 Minute Lunches) 12:10-2:25	Flex (45 mins) 11:15-12:00	C (35 mins) 10:35-11:10	C (80 mins+30 Minute Lunches) 12:10-2:25	Flex (45 mins) 11:15-12:00
D (80 mins) 2:35-3:55	F (80 mins+30 Minute Lunches) 12:10-2:25	Lunch	D (80 mins) 2:35-3:55	F (80 mins+30 Minute Lunches) 12:10-2:25
	G (80 mins) 2:35-3:55	D (35 mins) 12:40-1:15		G (80 mins) 2:35-3:55
		E (35 mins) 1:20-1:55		
		F (35 mins) 2:00-2:35		
		G (35 mins) 2:40-3:15		
		3:25-3:55 Additional Mtg/PD Time		



# Draft Hybrid Recommendation (2)

## Benefits of using current schedule framework

- Maintains time on learning for hybrid and distance-only students
- Allows for seamless and staggered transition
- Supports student organization and executive function
- Adjusted block length responsive to student and faculty feedback
- Allows return to distance only if needed

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
A (80 mins) 9:15-10:35	E (80 mins) 9:15-10:35	A (35 mins) 9:15-9:50	A (80 mins) 9:15-10:35	E (80 mins) 9:15-10:35
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		E (35 mins) 1:20-1:55		
		F (35 mins) 2:00-2:35		
		G (35 mins) 2:40-3:15		
		3:25-3:55 Additional Mtn/PD Time		

# Cohort Development Process

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- Families review and update *Hybrid* or *Distance-Only* selection based on new model details
- Number of cohorts will depend on revised selections to manage space and staffing constraints
  - Four Cohorts: 2 days in person every 2 weeks
  - Three Cohorts: 4 days in person every 3 weeks
  - Two Cohorts: 2 days in person every 1 week
- Fully remote students and students not in-person engage in all classes through HyFlex teaching model
- Include specific classes/programs in more than one cohort if possible

# Four Cohort Model

## Week One

Cohort A			Cohort B	
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
A (80 mins) 9:15-10:35	E (80 mins) 9:15-10:35	A (35 mins) 9:15-9:50 B (35 mins) 9:55-10:30	A (80 mins) 9:15-10:35	E (80 mins) 9:15-10:35
B (80 mins) 10:40-12:00	Community (30 mins) 10:40-11:10 Flex (45 mins) 11:15-12:00	C (35 mins) 10:35-11:10 FLEX (50 mins) 11:15-12:05	B (80 mins) 10:40-12:00	Community (30 mins) 10:40-11:10 Flex (45 mins) 11:15-12:00
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D (80 mins) 2:35-3:55	G (80 mins) 2:35-3:55	G (35 mins) 2:40-3:15 3:20-3:55 Additional Mtu/PD Time	D (80 mins) 2:35-3:55	G (80 mins) 2:35-3:55

## Week Two

Cohort C			Cohort D	
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
A (80 mins) 9:15-10:35	E (80 mins) 9:15-10:35	A (35 mins) 9:15-9:50 B (35 mins) 9:55-10:30	A (80 mins) 9:15-10:35	E (80 mins) 9:15-10:35
B (80 mins) 10:40-12:00	Community (30 mins) 10:40-11:10 Flex (45 mins) 11:15-12:00	C (35 mins) 10:35-11:10 FLEX (50 mins) 11:15-12:05	B (80 mins) 10:40-12:00	Community (30 mins) 10:40-11:10 Flex (45 mins) 11:15-12:00
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# Week

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# Benefits and Challenges of Proposed Hybrid

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## Benefits

- In-person learning opportunities respond to student priorities of connection and engagement
- Greater connection for all students and those struggling most with distance-only format
- Allows for greater academic engagement for students struggling with distance-only format

## Challenges

- Hybrid schedule makes academic teaching and learning more challenging for many students
- Hybrid courses move slower than current distance model and less course material mastered
- HyFlex format can be challenging for distance-only students and for faculty members
- Some extracurriculars may be impacted due to creative use of space.

# Steps Needed for Implementation

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- Families review and update *Hybrid* or *Distance-Only* selection based on new model details
  - Cohort creation based on hybrid preferences/space
- Offer professional learning and collaboration time for faculty to support HyFlex teaching
- Complete acquisition of additional audio/visual technology to enable continuous HyFlex teaching
- Continue to test and adjust school connectivity and bandwidth to support remote teaching and HyFlex teaching
- Complete review of remote staff accommodations by 11/30
- Ensure delivery of 1:1 devices for 9th grade students
- Logistics planning for in-person learning
- Additional considerations
  - Large-scale MCAS and PSAT testing in person in January
  - 1st Semester ends January 22nd/29th



# Public Health Consultation

- Continue to adhere to NPS 4 Health Pillars: masks, distancing, hand hygiene and staying home when ill
- Support student education to ensure safe social distancing during all in-person events
- Continue to review in-person recommendations with Newton Health and Human Services
- Monitor public health data and adjust model based on statewide guidance



# Phased Implementation Plans

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Recommended hybrid schedule can be phased in with increasing in-person events in December and HyFlex pilot in early January

- Continue and increase current academic and social events as planned
- Add transportation capacity to expand on-campus in-person activities on Wednesdays in Dec. and Jan.
- Faculty without remote accommodation return to work in-person to facilitate transition and support student needs
- Support staff implementation of additional in-person activities including, field trips, outdoor gatherings, seminars, mental health support, affinity groups, academic help sessions, and extracurriculars
- Consider shifting Wednesdays classes to asynchronous to facilitate in-person opportunities
- Pilot HyFlex teaching with college preparatory courses and senior courses in early January

# Potential Implementation Timeline

Timeframe	Recommended Action Steps
<b>Through November 30th</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue and increase current teacher-led and PTSO supported academic and social events as planned, through January</li> <li>Complete review of remote staff accommodations</li> <li>Continue to test and adjust school connectivity and bandwidth to support remote teaching and HyFlex teaching</li> </ul>
<b>December 1st-23rd</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Families review and update <i>Hybrid</i> or <i>Distance-Only</i> selection based on new model details</li> <li>Cohort creation based on hybrid preferences/space</li> <li>Offer professional learning and collaboration time for faculty to support HyFlex teaching</li> <li>Add transportation capacity to expand on-campus in-person academics, social &amp; emotional connection, and continued orientations on Wednesdays</li> </ul>
<b>January 4th-26th</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pilot HyFlex teaching with college preparatory courses and senior courses</li> <li>Complete acquisition of additional audio/visual technology to enable continuous HyFlex teaching</li> <li>Ensure delivery of 1:1 devices for 9th grade students</li> <li>Complete logistics planning for in-person learning</li> <li>MCAS and PSAT testing in person</li> </ul>
<b>January 25th-29th</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implementation of Hybrid Recommendation</li> </ul>

# Recommended Next Steps

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- School Committee presentation on 11/16; gather feedback
- Communicate proposals and support to high school staff
- Continue to negotiate with NTA regarding contractual impact of recommended schedule
- Continue dialogue with peer districts to address challenges to HyFlex hybrid for students and staff
  - Further focus groups with students and faculty to learn how to create sustainability
- Finalize in-person and remote staffing assignments by 11/30
- Continue to review plans and public health measures with Newton HSS

