Memorandum

TO: The Parents of Willow Hill School Students DATE: August 14, 2020

FROM: Marilyn G. Reid, Head of School

SUBJECT: Final Comprehensive Reopening Plan, Fall of 2020

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) has asked all public and approved private schools to submit a plan prioritizing the Teaching/Learning Model to begin the school year (2020-2021) approved by our Board of Trustees.

Three models for reopening were proposed by DESE: (1) all in-person, (2) all remote, and (3) a combination of the two. This last model is primarily thought of as a method to bring back students in shifts (such as a Monday/Tuesday in-person with Thursday/Friday remote) since the majority of schools do not have adequate space with physical distancing restrictions to bring back all of their student body at the same time. For Willow Hill School, this combination or "hybrid" model is not necessary since our School, given its limited enrollment and more-than-adequate space, can have all of our students return at the same time and meet DESE guidelines. Once we saw that our School could meet all of the DESE health and safety guidelines and in many instances provide enhanced safety measures, we have continued to be supportive of prioritizing this model, all in-person, to begin the school year, September 1, 2020. In selecting the all in-person model, we acknowledge that some parents might choose to have their child be all remote. At the end of this memorandum, there is a description of what remote learning will look like while the School is all in-person.

Please note that DESE is allowing only public schools to reduce the 180 day requirement to 170 days in order to provide adequate time for preparing teachers with the required health and safety guidelines and to share innovative approaches to remote teaching and learning. Recognizing that our population of students qualifies them for priorities of in person learning and services, our School will maintain (as required by DESE) the 180 days.

In order to implement an in-person teaching/learning model for the opening of school, the following adaptations have been made to ensure a safe environment:

Student Learning

- Single-use laptops only, either school or home supplied no sharing
- School-supplied laptops will be stored and charged in a single use space

Scheduling

 Buildings will be open at 7:50 a.m. to allow for a more elongated drop-off time; at the end of the day dismissal will come directly from classrooms based upon the presence of the driver

- Arrivals in the morning from 8:00 a.m. onward, report to 1st Period Classroom to get organized for the day and chat with your group.
- The morning break will be staggered to allow for increased physical distancing
- Lunch in two locations, Dining Room and a portion of the Gymnasium, and a combination of single use and rectangular tables to provide required seating distance
- Breaks from face coverings can be taken outside, at lunch, and at select class times and locations
- Chairs and canopies are available for outside classroom teaching
- After School Activities and Clubs will continue from 3:00 to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Thursday

Protocols and Facility Use

- Face covering required on campus, to enter all buildings, and moving within buildings Exception: scheduled "mask breaks" at designated locations if 6' apart, outside during PE if 10' apart
- All placement of desks and casual seating meets DESE distancing guidelines
- School van maximum capacity: 4 students, 1 driver
- All Visitors required to sign in (and out) with the following information: name, phone #, time interval, areas visited; may not be in the hallways during breaks or changing of periods
- Isolation room designated for possible COVID-19 symptomatic students; parents must pick them up within an hour
- If a student or staff member tests positive for COVID-19, all learning will be remote for a designated quarantine time period
- Separate Art supplies and storage for each student; duplicate PE equipment available
- Students will wipe down their desk and chair after each class; staff will disinfect hand rails, doorknobs, light switches, other shared classroom equipment multiple times per day
- Eating areas, microwaves, copy machines will be disinfected as needed
- Alcohol and Bleach wipes and hand sanitizer dispensers have been adequately ordered (6 month's supply); chemical disinfectants will be used in specific areas at designated times
- Assigned hand sanitizer locations
- Ventilation system has been reviewed and utilizes the maximum filtration system for the HVAC units, all of which are one to six years old
- Signage on all outside entrances and throughout the buildings to remind 6' physical distancing, hand washing, wearing of face covering, not sharing items or food, wiping down desks and high touch areas
- All water fountains are disabled, with the exception of the bottle filler near the locker rooms
- All snacks must be consumed in dining areas or outside

 Traffic flow patterns in hallways and stairways will be monitored to maintain physical distancing

The other plan in our prioritization of a teaching/learning model for our School is all remote and would occur in the instance of one of three foreseeable situations: (1) a positive COVID-19 test for a WHS student or staff member, (2) if maintaining the health and safety guidelines is not sustainable, or (3) if Governor Baker mandates school closures.

All remote learning will adhere to the structured learning time requirements the same as the all in-person learning model. All of our students have the capability and technology equipment to participate in remote learning. Attendance and participation will be taken for each class. State curriculum standards are followed by all teachers. All students will receive classroom grades and teachers, advisors, and administrators will consistently communicate with parents/guardians through Google Classroom, Zoom, and email. In-person meetings can be pre-arranged. Staffing will remain consistent between both the in-person and remote models. The curriculum is based upon the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks, and instructional materials are supplied by the School.

For those parents opting to have their child learn through the remote model while the School is in-person teaching and learning, or if their child needs to be home for quarantine or isolation, the school schedule will be similar to the in-person day. A Zoom session will be arranged for those students participating remotely and expectations for participation and grading will be the same as for the in-person students. There will be regular communication from the School to the student and their parents.

In terms of **student support and professional learning**, all of our teachers and school counselor will be and are sensitive to any signs if a particular student is struggling with any number of issues and primarily the social and emotional difficulties of COVID-19 related to loneliness, isolation, fear, and anxiety. All of our staff members are trained throughout the year in the *Social Thinking* curriculum and are efficient in identifying a student that needs help. During our Staff and Student Orientation Week this August a segment of our training time will be devoted to this subject.

During the Orientation Week, additional professional learning and training will be focused on sharing remote teaching/learning approaches that were particularly useful this past Spring. We are also developing a tutorial for parents in the use of Google Classroom so that they can better support their child's remote learning.

Our School will be fully prepared by September 1, 2020 to start school. The Board of Trustees have unanimously approved to **start the school year with the all in-person teaching/learning model**. We look forward to having you all back. Thank you to the parents for the care and support you give to your children. Our partnership with you is what makes it possible for your child to thrive.