

# **Perkins School for the Blind Comprehensive Reopening Plan August 14, 2020**

A. **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

**Student Demographics**

Perkins School for the Blind is a multifaceted program serving blind and visually impaired students as well as deafblind students, ages birth to 22 years, through on-campus day and residential programs as well as through early intervention services, itinerant services to public school students and outreach programs/short courses offered to students on weekends, school vacations, and during the summer.

All of our planning for student programming has maintained student and staff safety as our highest priority. Student success and progress are of critical importance continue to guide decisions regarding the best options for students and families.

This reopening plan addresses the needs of the approximately 177 students in the on-campus day and residential programs we will serve in fall 2020. The approximate breakdown of the day and residential students expected for the fall is as follows:

<b>Day Students:</b>	<b>131</b>
Early Learning Center/Lower School	55
Secondary	44
Deafblind	34
<b>Residential Students:</b>	<b>44</b>
Early Learning Center/Lower School	2
Secondary	28
Deafblind	16
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>177</b>

In general, the unique learning needs of students who are blind, visually impaired, and deaf blind, require specially designed instruction that is both meaningful and accessible, necessitate more in person time, and also require very close physical contact.

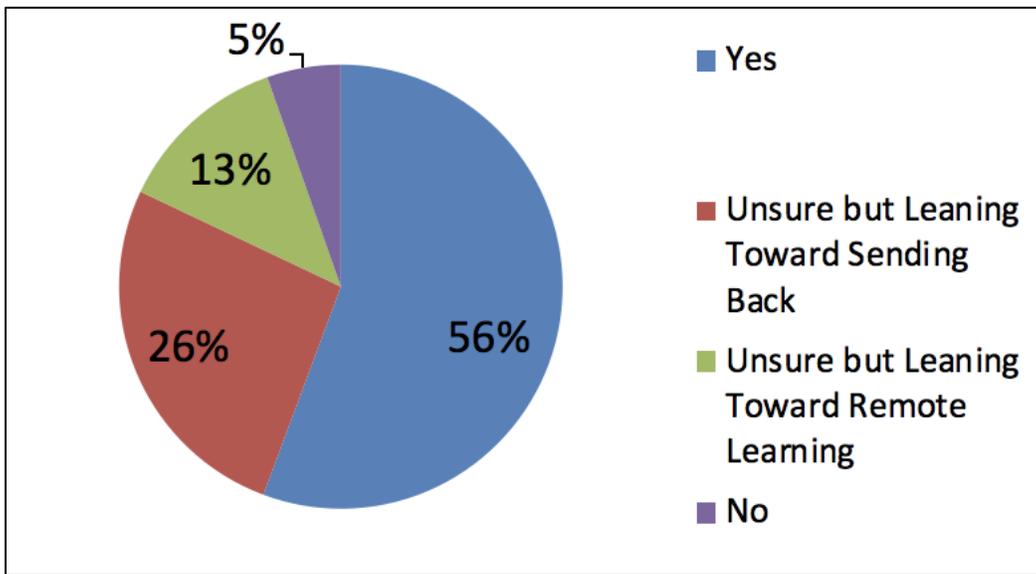
The learning profiles of our diverse student population on campus vary greatly. While a number of students are on track to receive a HS/MCAS diploma, a significantly larger number of students have very significant and complex needs and programming directly addresses needs identified through the IEP process. The latter group of students is more challenging to reach via remote services and is in highest need of in-person services to make meaningful progress and experience success.

**Data Collection and Analysis**

Perkins gathered and analyzed a great deal of information to determine the feasibility of returning to an in-person learning model from a variety of sources including : staff and

family surveys, input from staff and parents via various staff and PAC (Parent Advisory Council) meetings as well as town hall Zoom meetings, teacher assessments of student learning (remote), space planning with our facilities team, consultation with our food service department, a comprehensive medical review of our student population by our health services team, as well as a review of all relevant HR policies and procedures. Additionally, we reopened in July for in-person services inclusive of both day and residential students across all age groups to assess our readiness and determine the feasibility of a larger scale return to campus. This information was also extremely beneficial as we developed plans for both hybrid and fully remote models.

Our recent survey of families indicates a positive response regarding a larger scale return to in-person services as illustrated in chart below:



**Survey response rate: 85% (142 responses out of 168)**

**Stakeholder Engagement**

Since our initial closure in March, we have made extensive efforts to communicate with our stakeholders and engage them in a feedback loop that has yielded valuable input in the planning process (see Appendix pages 2-5). From the end of March through the first week of August approximately 50 meetings were held with staff and over 35 meetings were conducted with parents and families. Perkins established a formal fall reopening work group which is comprised of a cross section of leaders from Perkins, representative groups of staff and parents, as well as collaboration with leaders of other approved special education programs (see Appendix pages 6-8). In addition, topical work groups were established to address specific areas related to scheduling, student support, training, and other sample situation specific protocols (see Appendix pages 9-15).

The preliminary school reopening plan as well as an advance draft of this comprehensive reopening plan were shared with the Chair of the Perkins Board of Trustees and the Education Committee as well as the senior leadership of the organization and received an affirmative response.

**Rationale for Selection of Model**

Given the unique learning needs of our blind and visually impaired students and the diverse learning needs of our deafblind students with a dual sensory loss, Perkins has concluded that returning students as soon as possible to in-person learning opportunities provides the best chance for optimal outcomes and meaningful progress.

An extensive analysis of information collected from a wide variety of sources and multiple stakeholder groups supports the selection of a model that returns residential students to full-time in-person services with day students returning in a hybrid model with increased in-person time for our highest need students. Schedules and details are included in subsequent sections of this document and commensurate with the needs of our students.

**NOTE:** This document includes an Appendix with supporting documents that provide additional detail.

**B. LETTER FROM SUPERINTENDENT**



August 14, 2020

Dear Perkins School for the Blind Community:

Today Perkins submitted to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) our comprehensive plan for reopening the school year on September 8th. As indicated in our preliminary plan, we gathered information and input from a range of sources and methods. We reviewed the extensive educational, medical, and behavioral needs of all our students in order to develop a plan that would maximize in-person services for our students who are most in need of returning to campus on a consistent schedule.

We have selected a hybrid model for all of our Day students to begin the school year. Students in the Early Learning Center, Lower School, Secondary, and Deafblind departments will be assigned to cohorts that will provide them with both in-person services as well as remote instruction. For more specifics, please see the comprehensive plan document. Our Residential students in all of our departments will be provided with full-time in-person services. Remote only instruction will be provided to students who are not able to return to campus either for medical reasons or parent preference.

The careful and strategic return of students to campus does not signal a full reopening of the entire Perkins campus. Along with the limited number of Perkins staff already on campus, selected Educational Programs teachers and staff will return in order to serve students in our proposed learning models. All other Perkins employees will continue to remain remote and will return at a later time as directed by respective program leaders. All buildings have restricted access for staff authorized to return and the campus will remain closed to the public as we safely return students to campus.

Communication with each Perkins family will occur during the coming weeks to finalize planning, share specific scheduling details and other requirements (i.e. parent attestation process, testing, etc.) to ensure a smooth return to programming for each student. We are committed to ongoing and transparent communication with the entire Perkins community as we navigate the continually changing landscape.

Perkins and its leadership team will continue to monitor and evaluate the implementation of our model. We will carefully assess COVID 19 metrics in Massachusetts and make decisions accordingly to mitigate the risk to our students, their families, and our staff.

With Gratitude,  
Ed Bosso, Superintendent and President of Educational Programs

C. **IN-PERSON LEARNING MODEL:**

An in-person model will be implemented for our residential students to mitigate unnecessary risk to students, eliminate additional burden and expense to families for students travelling from a distance, as well as minimize the need to implement quarantine measures to ensure their safety. **Residential students coming from states other than those listed by MA as low risk will have to produce a negative test or follow quarantine guidelines prior to assimilation to campus.** Students in the residential program will be grouped in cohorts, separate from day students when possible, to mitigate the chance of spread of COVID 19 in the event of a positive case. There are approximately 45 residential students split primarily between the Secondary and Deafblind departments on campus residing in a total of 8 cottages. Physical placement of students and scheduling will facilitate appropriate social distancing while promoting the development of critical independent living and social skills development. Students will no longer congregate family style for meals but rather will be socially distanced, utilizing modified meal schedules when necessary. Classroom space will be identified outside of the cottages for residential students separate of the day students. Staff will use technology for learning groups that cross day and residential groups (see Appendix pages 16-17 for sample residential schedules for evenings and weekend).

D. **HYBRID LEARNING MODEL:**

Perkins programming for day students will align with a hybrid model, where the majority of students will be scheduled for both in-person learning and remote learning opportunities in a modified schedule. Physical placement of students and scheduling will facilitate appropriate social distancing. Some high need day students will be scheduled for an increased amount of in-person services. This model allows us to reach all students with a combination of in-person and remote services that is commensurate with the needs of the students and families. The schedules for each department are as follows:

**Early Learning Center/Lower School (ELC/LS):**

**Daily Schedule:**

8:25am – 3pm, Mon, Tues, Thurs, Fri and 8:25am – 2:00pm, Wed Early Release (staff PD)

**Description: COHORT A**

Students in **Cohort A** (highest need students) will attend in-person on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday and shift to remote services on Thursday and Friday each week.

**In-person programming** (3 days) for **Cohort A** will include:

Morning meetings (ELA/social engagement).

Unique Learning System (ULS) guided curriculum framework standard based instruction in all core academic areas.

Related service providers will see students directly, or in facilitated sessions remotely guided by Teaching Assistants (TAs).

Direct instruction in all areas of the Expanded Core Curriculum (ECC) for students with VI (visual impairments): AT (assistive technology), braille, O&M (orientation and mobility), Career Exploration, ILS (independent living skills), self-determination, social skills, compensatory access, and sensory efficiency.

**Remote services** (2 days) for **Cohort A** will include full days of synchronous and asynchronous instruction in all areas of the core and expanded core curriculum (ECC).

**Description: COHORT B**

Students in **Cohort B** will be remote Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday and attend in-person on Thursday and Friday.

**In-person programming** (2 days) for **Cohort B** will include:

Morning meetings (ELA/social engagement).

Unique Learning System (ULS) guided curriculum framework standard based instruction in all core academic areas. Grade level curriculum (content specific – STEM, Algebra, US History, etc.).

Related service providers will see students directly, or in facilitated sessions remotely guided by TAs.

Direct instruction in all areas of the Expanded Core Curriculum for students with VI: AT, braille, O&M, Career Exploration, ILS, self-determination, social skills, compensatory access and sensory efficiency.

**Remote services** (3 days) for **Cohort B** will include full days of synchronous and asynchronous instruction in all areas of the core and expanded core curriculum (ECC).

(Please see Appendix pages 18-19 for sample student schedules).

**Secondary Students:**

**Daily Schedule:**

8am – 3:05pm, Mon, Tues, Thurs, Fri and 8am – 2:10pm, Wed Early Release (staff PD)

**Description: COHORT A**

Students in **Cohort A** (highest need students) will attend in-person on Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday and receive remote services on Monday and Tuesday each week.

**In-person programming** (3 days) for **Cohort A** will include:

Morning meetings (ELA/social engagement).

Unique Learning System (ULS) guided curriculum framework standard based instruction in all core academic areas.

Related service providers will see students directly, or in facilitated sessions remotely guided by TAs.

Direct instruction in all areas of the Expanded Core Curriculum for students with VI:

AT, braille, O&M, Career Exploration, ILS, self-determination, social skills, compensatory access and sensory efficiency.

**Remote services** (2 days) for **Cohort A** will include full days of synchronous and asynchronous instruction in all areas of the core and expanded core curriculum (ECC).

**Description: COHORT B**

Students in **Cohort B** will be remote Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday and attend in-person on Monday and Tuesday.

**In person programming** (2 days) for **Cohort B** will include:

Morning meetings (ELA/social engagement).

Unique Learning System (ULS) guided curriculum framework standard based instruction in all core academic areas. Grade level curriculum (content specific – STEM, Algebra, US History, etc.).

Related service providers will see students directly, or in facilitated sessions remotely guided by TAs.

Direct instruction in all areas of the Expanded Core Curriculum for students with VI: AT, braille, O&M, Career Exploration, ILS, self-determination, social skills, compensatory access and sensory efficiency.

**Remote services** (3 days) for **Cohort B** will include full days of synchronous and asynchronous instruction in all areas of the core and expanded core curriculum (ECC).

(Please see Appendix pages 20-22 for sample student schedules).

**Deafblind (DB) Students:**

**Daily Schedule:**

8:45am – 3:00pm, Mon, Tues, Thurs, Fri and 8:45am – 2:10pm, Wed Early Release (staff PD)

**Description:**

DB day students will attend **in-person** programming (4 days) on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday and will participate in **remote services** (1 day) on Wednesday.

The overall class schedules for day and residential students were designed to allow for increased transition time among staff and RSPs as well as cleaning time of ten minutes after each session, and a change to the lunch times. The RSPs will organize a plan to limit the number of exposures in each classroom. This will assist in a decrease of locations for services. The schedules reflect the curriculum that students will be using when they return to school in September. The Deafblind Program accesses the Unique Learning Systems as the primary curriculum; it is adapted based on grade level and as well as academic learning areas. The ECC (Expanded Core Curriculum) is embedded in the schedules for all students. Students who will be remote on Wednesdays and will use Google Classroom (please see Appendix pages 23-26 for sample student schedules).

**E. REMOTE LEARNING MODEL:**

In a full remote learning model Perkins will continue to use Google Classroom as the platform for remote instruction in all areas of the core and expanded core curriculum (ECC). The schedule will incorporate both synchronous and asynchronous learning opportunities for students as appropriate and will be communicated to families in advance. Structured Learning Time requirements will apply to the remote learning model and schedules will mimic in person learning schedules (please see Appendix pages 18-26). Students' attendance and participation will be tracked and recorded. Additional interventions will be utilized by staff to maximize student attendance and participation when warranted. Each student's remote learning plan will address all IEP goal areas inclusive of regular assessment of student progress. Families will be provided appropriate instructional materials to support learning. Progress updates/reports will be shared with families and parents and students at appropriate intervals and families will be provided opportunities to give ongoing feedback and input.

**F. OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME:**

Perkins is exploring the possibility of offering opportunities beyond the school day for students. The Lower School was successful in providing extended day offerings on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 3-5PM. Although there were challenges with shifting to virtual/remote programs this past spring, extended day programs were offered to approximately 15 students through collaboration with many in the Perkins community.

While residential students will have evening and weekend activities schedules, after school programming for day students remains an evolving area of need that is being reviewed by workgroups. We will continue to look at expanded opportunities for after school options. See Appendix pages 16-17 for sample residential schedules for evenings and weekend.

**G. STUDENT SUPPORTS AND PROFESSIONAL LEARNING:**

**Student and Family Support**

Perkins continues to identify and develop supports and resources for parents and has shared extensive resource lists of the past several months. We have a workgroup who is continuing to explore ways to address training and support needs for students and families.

Social Workers/Case Managers will reach out to all parents/students the week of August 31 or earlier to share and discuss programming for the 20-21 school year. Each student

is assigned a clinician (SW/School Psych) and will meet as appropriate at least one time per week to address social and emotional needs. Additionally, a BCBA (Board Certified Behavior Analyst) is available in each program to meet with students/parents weekly as needed. Perkins will continue to provide parents with weekly contact with social workers/school psychologists/case managers. All students will have access to a SW/School Psych daily in person or remotely to address social/emotional needs.

**School Calendar and Professional Development (PD) Schedule**  
(Wednesday Early Release Days = 2:15-4:00pm)

**August 31- Sept. 4**

Professional Development and Training for Teachers and Staff

- Mandatory Trainings
- COVID 19 related areas
- Remote Learning: Support, Strategies and Best Practices
  - An overview of Zoom
  - A review of Google Classroom
  - A presentation of "best practices" by various Perkins teachers

<b>Sept. 7</b>	<b>Closed – Labor Day</b>
<b>Sept. 8</b>	<b>Full-time residential students return to campus Hybrid Schedule begins for all day students</b>
<b>Sept. 16</b>	<b>Parent Panel I / Etiology specific</b>
Sept. 23	Department Meetings
<b>Sept. 30</b>	<b>Education Continuity Subcommittee Meetings</b>
Oct. 7	Department Meetings
<b>Oct. 12</b>	Columbus Day (No classes – residences open)
<b>Oct. 14</b>	<b>Parent Panel II / Etiology specific</b>
Oct. 21	Department Meetings – COVID 19 Updates/Refresher Trainings
<b>Oct. 28</b>	<b>Education Continuity Subcommittee Meetings</b>
Nov. 4	Department Meetings
<b>Nov. 11</b>	<b>Professional Development: NEASC Recommended Area</b>
Nov. 18	Department Meetings
<b>Nov. 25</b>	<b>Early Dismissal (12:00 noon) Start Thanksgiving Break</b>
<b>Nov. 26-29</b>	<b>Thanksgiving Break</b> (Res. Students may return after 3pm on 11/29)
Dec. 2	Department Meetings – COVID 19 Updates/Refresher Trainings
Dec. 9	Department Meetings
<b>Dec. 16</b>	<b>Professional Development: NEASC Recommended Area</b>
<b>Dec. 22</b>	<b>Early Dismissal (12:00 noon) Start Winter Break</b>
<b>Dec. 23-Jan. 1</b>	<b>CLOSED – Winter Break</b>
<b>Jan. 4</b>	<b>Classes resume for students</b>
Jan. 6	Department Meetings
<b>Jan. 13</b>	<b>Professional Development: NEASC Recommended Area</b>
Jan. 20	Department Meetings

<b>Jan. 27</b>	<b>Professional Development: NEASC Recommended Area</b>
Feb. 3	Department Meetings
<b>Feb. 10</b>	<b>Professional Development: NEASC Recommended Area</b>
<b>Feb. 12</b>	<b>Early Dismissal (12:00 noon) Start February Break</b>
<b>Feb. 15-19</b>	<b>CLOSED – Feb. Break</b> (Res. Students may return after 3pm on 2/21)
Feb. 24	Department Meetings – COVID 19 Updates/Refresher Trainings
Mar. 3	Department Meetings
<b>Mar. 10</b>	<b>Professional Development: NEASC Recommended Area</b>
Mar. 17	Department Meetings
<b>Mar. 24</b>	<b>Professional Development: NEASC Recommended Area</b>
Mar. 31	Department Meetings
Apr. 7	Department Meetings
<b>Apr. 14</b>	<b>Professional Development: NEASC Recommended Area</b>
<b>Apr. 16</b>	<b>Early Dismissal (12:00 noon) Start Spring Break</b>
<b>Apr. 19-23</b>	<b>Spring Break</b>
Apr. 28	Department Meetings – COVID 19 Updates/Refresher Trainings
May 5	Department Meetings
<b>May 12</b>	<b>Professional Development: NEASC Recommended Area</b>
May 19	Department Meetings
May 26	Department Meetings
May 31	Department Meetings
June 2	Department Meetings
<b>June 9</b>	<b>Professional Development: NEASC Recommended Area</b>
June 16	Department Meetings
June 23	Department Meetings
<b>June 25</b>	<b>Graduation</b>
<b>June 28-July2</b>	<b>June Break Week</b>

**Note:** See Appendix pages 27-30 for the full professional development planning document.

**Quarterly progress checks:** Student progress reports will be issued on the dates below. This will also be a time when we will assess effectiveness of learning models and adjust as needed.

**ELC/LS:** November 2, January 25, March 29, June 14

**Secondary:** November 2, January 18, March 22, June 28

**Deafblind:** November 13, February 5, April 9, July 2

## H. **OTHER: Facilities and Operations**

### **Building air flow/circulation**

- All building fresh air intake systems will be at full capacity to ensure that the maximum amount of fresh air enters all interior spaces.
- All HVAC filters will be changed out monthly to a high-grade filter unit.
- Building automation systems will be monitored daily for proper function and efficiency.
- Internal Technician staff will conduct daily in person HVAC systems checks.
- Additional air purification units will be on hand and utilized if additional air circulation and purification is needed.

### **Cleaning and Disinfecting Protocols**

- Custodial staff will be scheduled and assigned to specific floors of each building during the school day.
- Custodial staff will be responsible for constant and consistent cleaning of all high touch areas, spaces and bathrooms.
- Custodial managers will conduct multiple daily cleaning reviews to ensure proper coverage and cleaning techniques.
- After dismissal, custodial staff will deep clean all classrooms, offices and common areas.
- Nightly ionized spraying will be conducted in all classroom, offices and common areas by an experienced contracted vendor.
- A schedule will be implemented for the residential cottages to minimize impact to programming while maximizing building cleanliness.

### **PPE Supply**

- PPE supplies including gloves, masks, gowns, face shields, plexiglass dividers, wipes, hand sanitizer, and thermal scanners have been ordered, delivered and are readily available to all Perkins staff members.
- PPE supplies will be managed through our internal work orders system which will track individual orders, consumption, available supplies and reordering trigger points.

#### **PPE type and inventory**

Gloves - 200,000

Masks - 90,000

Gowns - 11,000

Face Shields - 11,000

Plexiglass Dividers – 90

Wipes - 5,000

Hand Sanitizer - 3,000

Thermal Scanners (hand held) - 20

Thermal Scanners (tripod) - 7

**NOTE:** See Appendix pages 31-32 for sample outdoor maps for Hilton and Lower School illustrating the drop off and pick up areas, staff and student entrances and exits along with social distancing demarcations.

I. **CERTIFICATION OF HEALTH AND SAFETY REQUIREMENTS:** Perkins certifies that we meet the final health and safety requirements issued by DESE found in the following documents:

- [Initial Fall School Reopening Guidance](#)
- [Fall Reopening Facilities and Operations Guidance](#)
- [Fall Reopening Transportation Guidance](#)
- [Comprehensive Special Education Guidance](#)
- [Guidance for Courses Requiring Additional Safety Considerations for Fall 2020](#)
- [Protocols for responding to COVID-19 scenarios in school, on the bus, or in community settings](#)
- [Career/Vocational Technical Education Reopening Guidance](#)