



How Should Desks Be Set Up in Each Classroom to Maximize Capacity and Socially Distance?

An excerpt from

DMGroup's School Restart Research Brief Series



Access to the entire research brief series is available to DMGroup Members

How Should Desks Be Set Up in Each Classroom to Maximize Capacity and Socially Distance?

Maximizing the number of students in a room while maintaining social distancing is a teaching and learning imperative. Since the number of classroom teachers won't be increasing, if a class is split in half, for example, then half the week students won't be with a classroom teacher, which significantly reduces teaching time and student learning.

To Maximize the Available Space in Each Classroom:

1. Determine if there are any moveable, non-essential furnishings in each room and remove these items. These may include:
 - Unused computers
 - Teachers' desks
 - Shelves
 - Portable whiteboards
2. Decide if students sit flush to the windows or walls of the classroom or if there will be a perimeter of space around the room. Reducing the perimeter of open space around the classroom will allow more students to sit in the room.

This might seem like a small point, but depending on classroom dimensions, the difference between a 2-foot perimeter and a 3-foot can result in 25% fewer students in a room. Some models suggest 6 feet from the wall, but there doesn't seem to be a need to socially distance from classroom walls.

3. Determine the social distancing space between students. For example, the school may choose to maintain six feet of social distance between students, in which case students should sit six feet apart. This is typically measured from center of desk to center of desk.
4. Determine how much space the teacher will need to occupy in the room. A teacher may need to maintain twice as much space as one student in the room to effectively move and support students. The school should determine a reasonable amount of space in each room for the teacher to occupy.

In a traditional classroom, 20% or more of space is dedicated to teacher space and teacher used supplies like easels and such. In the extraordinary times this may not be the best use of space.

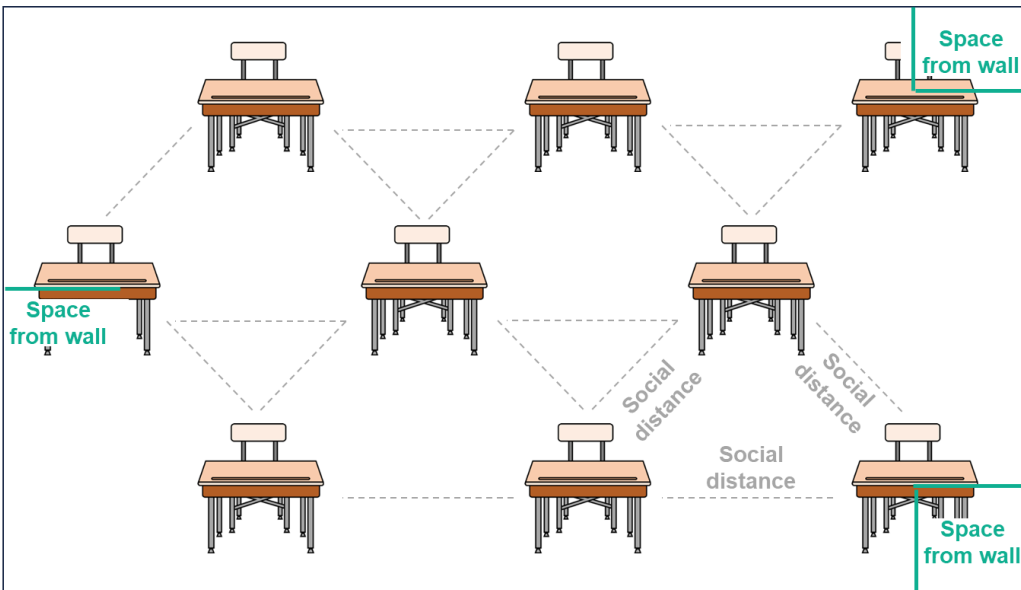


5. Determine desk "grid type". Schools can choose between two models:

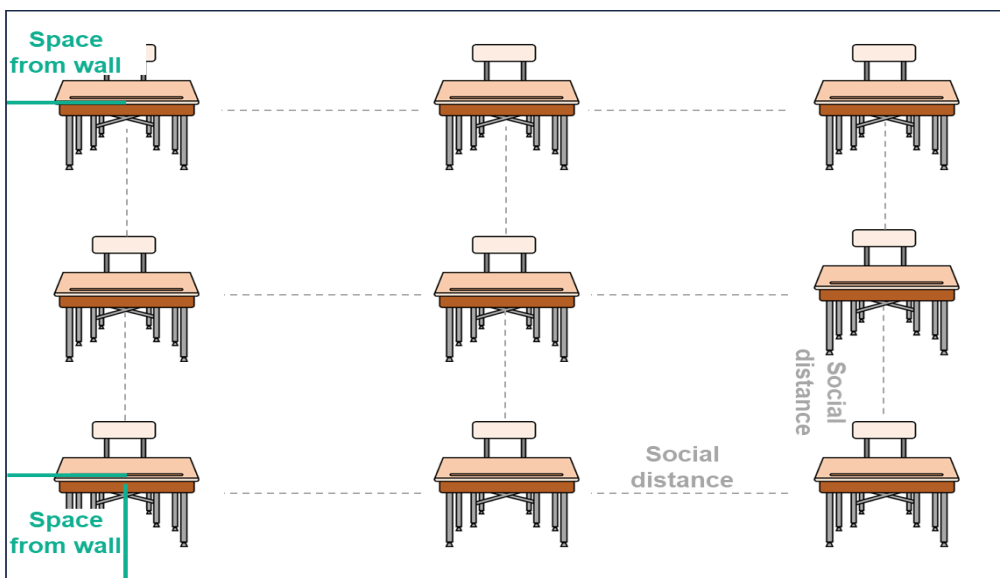
- Staggered desk spacing that creates a "lattice" pattern
- Inline spacing with a right-angle pattern

Depending upon the length and width of the classroom, one of these models may fit more students than the other.

Staggered desk spacing that creates a "lattice" pattern



Inline spacing with a right-angle pattern



DMGroup has developed an excel based tool to help schools determine the number of students that can fit in a classroom of any dimensions given district social distancing guidelines and perimeter spacing inputs.

The above is an excerpt from “Maximizing Classroom Capacity: Social Distancing Within Instructional Space” in the Operational Issues: School Restart Research Brief, prepared by District Management Group.

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