

Reopening Task Force Committee Notes

July 17, 2020: 10:00am – 11:00am

Attendees: Rick Harris, Paul LaMarca, Ann Silver, Ben Hayes, Jeff Brasel, Leslie Allfree, Natha Anderson, Serena Robb, Tom Stauss, Veronica Taylor, Virginia Doran, Adam Searcy, Chris Turner, David Hartshorn, Dina Ciaramella, Erika Ryst, Jackie James, Jennifer Hodges, Joe Maez, Katherine Loudon, Kindra Fox, Lana Ball, Laura Hutchinson, Laurel Inuma, Lianka Soliz, Mark Mathers, Matt Ochs, Maureen Wander, Pete Etchart, Prim Walters, Rick Martin, Jeff Foss, Roy Anderson, Ruby Burnley, Scott Lee, Tami Goulden, Tiffany Young, Trish Shaffer, Melissa Gillis, Megan Downs

Notetaker: Jen Caldwell

Welcome and Agenda Review:

There were no suggested changes to the agenda.

Update/Meeting with WCHD:

Paul LaMarca updated the group on a meeting that took place with Washoe County Health Department (WCHD). In that meeting a lot of decisions were made regarding isolation/exclusions, face coverings and the time frame for communications to go out to community/staff/families.

Exclusions: It was determined that “runny nose” would be removed as a symptom on the self-screening tool; however, “congestion” will remain as a symptom. It was also decided that there would be a 10-day exclusion period unless a negative COVID test is provided.

Also discussed at the WCHD meeting was the criteria for a school/district shut down due to COVID. Paul discussed that an analysis would take place at the site level as they would have to determine staffing needs, etc. Human Resources and OSL may also need to provide further analysis – this will be discussed further at the COVID meeting later today (7/17/20).

Natha Anderson asked whether the protocols for shutting down a school/district are in writing and her concerns for teachers being looked at as the villains in school closures. Paul LaMarca stated that it has not been put into writing yet. Rick Harris stated that the district will be sensitive with our messaging.

Discussion took place around scenarios when a child gets sick at school. Where will they go? Do the schools have enough space and staff? How will a sick student be escorted to the clinic or designated “sick area.” Paul LaMarca, Adam Searcy, Leslie Allfree and Natha Anderson all provided input and additional questions for discussion.

Joe Maez asked if the district has considered transporting sick students to one central location until they can be safely picked up. Paul LaMarca stated that this committee and other district leadership members are putting all ideas on the table until that idea is eliminated and thanked Joe for his suggestion. Rick Harris stated that traditionally, it is a very small percentage of parents/guardians that do not pick their child up right away when called to do so due to an illness. Paul reiterated that all exclusions will impact families to some degree, unfortunately.

Face Coverings: Paul LaMarca briefed the committee on some recent decisions/discussion around face coverings. He stated that Ann Marie Dickson is working on this issue specifically with Special Education students while Leslie Allfree is working on defining who will wear face coverings, which kind of face covering/shield, duration of time, etc. They are receiving guidance from both our WCSD legal team as well as the CDC to define guidance around this issue.

At the COVID meeting on July 17, further discussion will take place around fabric face coverings, face masks with a clear opening (for the hearing impaired), and face shields options.

Matt Ochs asked what will be done for those that refuse to wear any type of face covering or not wearing the proper type. Paul LaMarca answered that a behavioral matrix is being developed and is continuously being updated – they are determining what accountability will look like and are anticipating discipline issues in the upcoming school year.

Natha Anderson brought up a threatening FaceBook post from a disgruntled parent that has caused major concern around staff/teacher safety. Rick Harris stated that they have many safety protocols in place and Paul stated that this is a continuum of the behavior matrix already being developed.

Prim Walters mentioned students in the SIP program, who already have behavior issues. Paul stated that they have discussed options and it is a possibility that behavior problems result in in-home teaching options. He stated that we don't have great answers to all of these questions right now but the discussions are taking place at all levels.

Communications: Paul stated that it is the goal to have key decision points by July 24th and messaging to staff/students/families by the end of July.

Natha Anderson mentioned that the WEA is pushing at all levels to have the reopening decision reconsidered and for a delay to the opening of schools in the Fall. Paul LaMarca thanked Natha for her advocacy and reiterated that all decisions being considered are made with both the staff's and student's best interests at hand.

Plexiglass:

Adam Searcy discussed a Memo that was distributed to Principals this week regarding plexiglass needs. He stated that in some instances, plexiglass will be considered for areas where 6-feet of

distancing is not possible, but as of right now, no plexiglass is being approved for classrooms. They are exploring options where there are tables vs. desks and a lot of furniture relocation will also be taking place district-wide.

Prim Walters brought up her concerns – her school has a lot of tables and they are having troubles getting desk replacements. She feels plexiglass is a great option at her school not only for spacing issues but also for interventions/small reading groups/etc. to remain in place.

MS and HD Cohort Groups:

Joe Maez presented the group with an idea that he has found to have gained support by the CDC as well as American Pediatric Institute. He is suggesting that we consider cohort groups at the middle and high schools levels where students will be placed into common groups according to same core classes on in-school days and other specialty/elective courses on at-home days.

Rick Harris stated that scheduling at the secondary level is a huge challenge already, without special grouping, and Paul said that it may be a more viable option at the middle schools. Katherine Loudon commented that counselors and principals are currently working on scheduling and supports needing to be put into place. Natha Anderson commented that the cohort grouping would not work at the high school level for staffing because some teachers teach different levels (ie: freshman Biology and Sophomore Chemistry). The Teaching & Learning Committee is also working on these logistics.

Other Issues:

Rick Harris brought up recess, which is another area that needs to be addressed and answers communicated. Prim Walters, Leslie Allfree and Dina Ciaramella provided questions: will masks be worn at recess? Will playground equipment be off limits? When can the face coverings be taken off, will there be “mask breaks?” What about social distancing in Science classrooms where a lot of collaboration takes place?

Paul LaMarca stated that the answers to all of these questions still need to be developed and we are waiting on guidance for many of them. When we have the answers, clear and concise messaging will be crucial.

The next Recovery Meeting will be on **Friday, July 24, 2020 at 10:00am**. If you have items for the agenda, please send them to Rick Harris or Paul LaMarca. Thank you.