

Back to School



June 17, 2020

Welcome to our weekly “Back to School E-newsletter” for families!

We’ve launched this publication to keep everyone updated on the 2020-21 school year and share new information as it becomes available.

Needless to say, school leaders around the country are planning the start of next school year under a cloud of uncertainty. Things can change rapidly (and unexpectedly) with the next state order or guidance from health officials. Our goal is to be ready to respond and keep families informed.



Planning and Input

For several weeks now, we have had teams in place that are working on various parts of a responsible plan for reopening. The plan is being developed using information recently collected from parents, students and staff. An additional survey of families is being developed in conjunction with Battelle, so please keep an eye out for your opportunity to participate and shape our planning efforts. **We’d love to see close to a 100% participation rate from our families.**

As of today, there are about 300 various components we are working through regarding our return to school. We're also monitoring information coming out from national, state and local policy makers and health department officials. Planning for the opening of school is being approached according to the following premises: there will still be a virus in the fall, there will not be a vaccine by the time school is set to open, and there will be an expectation for teaching and learning to continue.

While there has been limited state and federal guidance on what school should or could look like in the fall, planning for the 2020-21 school year is being approached from three possible scenarios:

1. Schools reopen under a 100% distance learning model;
2. Schools reopen under a 100% in-person instructional model; and
3. Schools open under a hybrid model with some in-person instruction and some distance learning.



In addition to a core planning team, there are teams focused on plans for remote learning, transportation and facilities operations, building operations, human resources, policy review, and community engagement/communications. Each team has a liaison from our Board of Education, and last week the Board held a work session that focused on Back to School planning. You can [watch that work session](#) on the Board's YouTube channel. A few of the most pertinent pieces of information are summarized below. Our goal is to provide you with these weekly updates until the day before school begins on August 13.



Academics

District officials continue to explore professional development opportunities for staff to support their use of new education platforms and technologies. Remote learning has been a focus and we continue our efforts to create examples of student, teacher and parent expectations for learning. Once the remote learning plan is complete, the focus will turn to developing a blended approach. The remote learning plan will become the foundation of the blended learning plan.



As for the operation of schools, we continue to examine what things might look like if schools have to operate with a reduced student capacity. Things being considered include the adaptation of existing spaces, as well as maintaining social distancing during arrival, dismissal, class changes, lunch, and within classrooms. There are over 1,300 spaces to be evaluated. Other considerations are being given to things such as the use of water fountains, time provided for hand washing, and the use of hand sanitizer by older students.



We're also exploring a possible model for when students will attend school vs. remote learning, as well as "hands-on" electives such as choir, band, orchestra, art, etc. Secondary principals worked on a table-top simulation for what that might look like at their individual schools. We will continue to explore these results and various other scenarios at all grade levels as we work to create a common plan to return to school.



Operations

We're experiencing an average number of staffing changes this year, so the pandemic is not significantly impacting our processes or numbers. Our efforts to recruit and hire staff as early as possible has helped prepare our district for these unanticipated times. We do not believe the current pandemic has negatively impacted our ability to attract a strong pool of highly qualified applicants. We continue to hold virtual interviews and onboarding. We are also exploring options to ensure we have a sufficient number of substitutes available for situations when staff may be out of the building for multiple days.



We are being mindful of employees who may be more at-risk of COVID 19-related issues and identifying ways to support them once we better understand how our return-to-work plan will be implemented. We continue working with our online training provider and are also developing guidance documents for staff regarding their return to potential new work routines (social distancing, facial coverings, assessment of work conditions, wellness resources, etc.).

We're also examining the increased workload likely to be placed on our custodial operations as it relates to additional cleaning and sanitizing needs, community use of our facilities, and the likely need to modify policies and practices regarding visitors to our schools. We're likely to see a similar impact on our warehouse staff and other satellite services.



Transportation is one operational area that would be most impacted by required adjustments. Simply put, we would nearly have to double our operational capacity and alter service levels to comply with current social distancing recommendations. The availability of drivers and vehicles, as well as the cost, are some of the concerns associated with meeting these health recommendations.



Food Services has been examining what breakfast and lunch would look like for students while meeting recommended health and social distancing guidelines. Depending upon what our return to school looks like, this likely will require changes to how students move through lunch lines and

additional spaces within each school to be designated as locations for students to eat their meals, including possibly eating within classrooms. In the event of a return to distance learning, either at the outset of the year or at any point during the year, we would look at resuming meal deliveries as offered during this past spring.



District officials have gradually been reopening access to schools and facilities for student athletes and marching band members for their training and practices. Coaches and directors are communicating these details directly with families of the students involved in these activities. Expanding access to our grounds and facilities for youth sports organizations and other community organizations remains under discussion with details forthcoming.

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Parents/Guardians: The District is sometimes able to provide free language assistance in other languages. If you need such assistance, please contact the building secretary or building administrator at your child's school and let them know the language you speak.

Spanish: Padres / Guardianes: A veces el Distrito puede proporcionar asistencia gratis en otros idiomas. Si necesita esta ayuda, comuníquese con la secretaria del edificio o con el administrador del edificio en la escuela de su hijo y hágalos saber el idioma que usted habla.

Somali: Waalidiinta/Mas'uuliyiinta: Degmada Waxbarashadu waxay mararka qaarkood idinka caawin kartaa luqooyinka kale. Haddii aad u baahan tahay caawintaas, fadlan la xariir xoghaynta ama qofka maamula iskuulka ilmahaagu dhigto una sheeg luqadda aad ku hadashid.